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The life and writings of
George Washington Doane ...

THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

GEORGE WASHINGTON DOANE ✓

D.D. LL.D

FOR TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS

BISHOP OF NEW JERSEY.

CONTAINING HIS

POETICAL WORKS, SERMONS, AND MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS;

WITH

A MEMOIR,

BY HIS SON,

WILLIAM CROSWELL DOANE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

NEW YORK:

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,

443 & 445 BROADWAY.

LONDON: 16 LITTLE BRITAIN.

1861.

THE
PAROCHIAL SERMONS
OF
GEORGE WASHINGTON DOANE,
D.D., LL.D.,
BISHOP OF NEW JERSEY;
FOR TWENTY-SIX YEARS
RECTOR OF ST. MARY'S PARISH, BURLINGTON.

EDITED BY HIS SON,
WILLIAM CROSWELL DOANE.

This noble 'nsample to his sheep he yaf
That first he wrought and afterward he taught,
Out of the Gospel, he, the wordes caught,
And this figure, he added yet thereto,
That of gold ruste, what should iron do ?
* * * Christes lore, and His apostles' twelve
He taught, but first he followed it himselve.
CANTEBURY TALES.

NEW YORK :
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,
443 & 445 BROADWAY.
LONDON: 16 LITTLE BRITAIN.
1861.

ENTERED, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1860, by
THE REV. WILLIAM CROSWELL DOANE,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the
District of New Jersey.

TO

THE WARDENS, VESTRYMEN AND PARISHIONERS

Of St. Mary's Parish, Burlington,

MY FATHER'S WELL-BELOVED FLOCK, NOW MINE;

THESE WORDS OF EXHORTATION, SELECTED FROM THE MANY THAT HE UTTERED IN THEIR EARS,

ARE MOST LOVINGLY DEDICATED,

IN THE EARNEST HOPE THAT THEY MAY SINK DEEPLY IN THEIR HEARTS;

THE VOICE OF THEIR OWN SHEPHERD WHICH THEY KNEW,

WHO HAS GONE BEFORE THEM, THAT HE MAY LEAD THEM SO, TO FOLLOW HIM,

INTO THE GREEN PASTURES AND BESIDE THE STILL WATERS

OF

THE PARADISE OF GOD.

P R E F A C E.

To publish my Father's parochial sermons, is to wake echoes that scarcely slumber, in the loving hearts which still enshrine his words, or in the noble Church that rung again to the searching, reaching, swelling tones of his great voice. Even to those who never heard him preach, they will witness to the fulness, and the earnestness, and the power, with which, he "declared the whole counsel of God." But his presence, his emphasis, his manner, his voice, will linger in them, to any who have listened to his preaching.

Servabit odorem, testa, diu.

This volume takes the place of two, in the original plan of the work. So that no very definite order could be observed throughout. The few sermons, more strictly local in their bearing, are reserved for future publication ; and some sermons, in sets. The sermons for the seasons are of course in order. And the last sermon in the volume is the last he ever preached, on the evening of Passion Sunday, A. D. 1859, in Trinity Church, Red Bank ; but little more than a fortnight, before he entered upon that eternal life, which is "the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

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SERMON I.

THE SAVIOUR TO BE CONFESSED BEFORE THE WORLD.

ST. MATTHEW X. 32, 33.—Whosoever therefore shall confess me, before men, him will I confess, also, before my Father, which is in heaven. But, whosoever shall deny me, before men, him will I, also, deny, before my Father, which is in heaven.

It is often said that religion is a matter between the heart and God. And it is true. That can be no religion which is not of the heart. And the very meaning of the word, re-binding, binding back, expressly tells us that it is re-union of a fallen soul with God. But then it is not all the truth. Though indeed a matter between the heart and God, religion is much more. It is not a thing done in a corner. It must not be a light under a bushel, or under a bed. It must be known and read of all men. It must give light to all that are in the house. The confession of the Saviour, that will be owned in heaven, must be made before the world. Not to confess Him before men, is to be denied by Him before His Father.

You often hear it said of a man, "he has a great respect for religion. But he is not a professor." And

people live and die, contented with being what they call religious, in a private way, who never have professed their Saviour openly. Against this fatal error, our dear Lord expressly warns His followers. The substance of the text is clearly this: if any man will not profess me openly on earth, then I will openly deny him, before my Father which is in heaven. A more startling proposition hardly can be stated. Nor one more commonly disregarded.

To consider why the Saviour must be confessed before men, and how the confession must be made, will occupy the Sermon. A fitting subject, as we approach the Via Dolorosa which leads through Lent to the awful anniversary of the Crucifixion. And especially so, in its connection with the announcement which has just been made, of the approaching annual confirmation.

My brethren, I desire your utmost seriousness of mind and heart. A day is coming, when we all shall stand, before the Judge. He will descend, from heaven, to close the drama of Redemption. Before Him, all the nations will be gathered. The living, caught, in a moment, by that fearful trump which will fill earth and heaven with its appalling blast; and hurried from their cares, their sorrows and their sins, to meet their Lord. The dead started, as suddenly, from valley and from hill, from crowded city and sequestered hamlet, from the dark crypt of old cathedral or the sweet village church-yard, from torrid sands, and floating icebergs, and the deep, deep sea. All shall be there; from Adam, to the latest born of

woman. They shall surround the throne. Their sight shall rivet itself on Him that sits upon it. There shall be a silence, which will pain the ear. There shall be a terror, that shall still the very beatings of the heart. Voiceless, motionless, pulseless, breathless. What a moment. It will seem eternity. It will involve it. And the dividing point, at which that surging sea of souls will part, to the right hand of unutterable bliss, or the left hand of unutterable woe, will be the profession of the Saviour before men. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

How can it not be so? Try it by human practices. There is a contest between two parties in a State. No matter what the names. By what remotest possibility, can a Republican expect an office from a Democratic Administration? A merchant or a man of science would visit foreign countries, for his business or his pleasure. How can he get the passport, which is to be his safeguard everywhere, but as a citizen of the United States? There is a European war. The ocean is alive with hostile fleets. What but the Stars and Stripes will save our merchantmen, from search and confiscation? Were Plato's followers ashamed of him? Is discipleship a private matter? Can allegiance be a secret? Or loyalty a thing of "fast and loose"? Least of all surely when the king is God. When the venture is the soul. When eternity is to be lost or

won. And the price, at which its possibility was purchased, was the shedding of His own heart's blood. My brethren, when the Lord who bought us came from heaven to seek and save the lost, He came not on a private mission. He did not veil Himself in clouds. He left no possibility of doubt as to His coming or its purpose. The All Creator made it known, in that unhappy Garden, which was Eden, now, no more. A line of prophets from the beginning of the ages kept it constantly before the world. The highest Archangel was its immediate herald. And the whole host of heaven welcomed Him to His abode in a manger. Nor was His death in private. The Jewish Sanhedrim stood, with the Roman army, at His Cross. The heavens were darkened at the sight. The quaking earth confessed the Sufferer, God. And the old dead of every age broke from their graves, to own Him as the Lord of death, as well as life. And it is He, that is to be owned in secret! It is He, whose ransomed are to shrink from their profession of Him! It is He, of whom sinners are to be ashamed! Was it so with the old Saints? Did Stephen shrink from owning Him, amid that storm of stones? When Peter and John were beaten, did they cease to own His name? When they went back and told their company, did they determine to keep silence of the things which they had seen and heard? Was Paul ashamed to preach the truth in Rome? A private religion. A private sea! A private sun! A private sky! A private rainbow! Or a private earthquake! And such an estimate as

this is of redemption. As if it were of two, or seven, or ten ; and not of all the race ! As if it were a rescue merely from suffering, and shame, and death ; and not the birth of a newer, and a nobler life ! As if it were a thing of time, and earth, and sense ; when it is the joy of heaven, and the glory of eternity, and the crown of God ! To be converted, is to turn from sin to holiness. To be regenerate, is to become the child of God. To be renewed, is to be conformed ever more and more to His image. And the price which purchased this was the Cross ! Was that a privacy ? And the power to do it in us is the Holy Ghost ! Did He descend invisibly on Jesus Christ or on the Apostles ? No, my beloved. Though religion is indeed a thing between the heart and God, it is only as the tree is in the seed. To be a tree, it must shoot up, it must spread out, it must show leaves, it must bear fruit ; and birds must make their nests, upon its branches. When the Gospel dispensation was first opened, was it not in the full presence of this Pentecostal Multitude ? Were not the first three thousand, whom its preaching won to Christ, baptized before them all ? Were not the multitudes, of men and women, who professed the faith of Christ, from day to day still added unto them ? And did not the Lord add daily, to the Church, the saved ? Were not their names written in heaven ? Were not their lives radiant on earth ? Did they not pass through life, a suffering, but triumphal host ; bearing on high the bleeding blazon of that Cross, which they wore inwardly in their hearts' folds ? And are they not in

Paradise a glorious company, which no arithmetic of man can number, joying forever in the peace and presence of the Lamb who bought them with His blood? Could it be so, if they had not openly confessed His name? Or, if it could, would it not contradict these solemn words of His: "Whosoever shall not confess me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven"—"Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with the Holy Angels"?

"Ashamed of Jesus! empty pride;
I'll boast a Saviour, crucified;
And, oh, may this, my portion be;
My Saviour, *not* ashamed of me!"

The sinner to be saved, then, must confess the Saviour before men; must publicly profess the name and faith of Jesus Christ. *How* shall he do it, is the question which remains to be considered. What were the terms of the commission to the Apostles? "Go, ye; and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them." On what conditions did the ascending Sufferer make the offer of Salvation? "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." What was the answer of the Apostles to the inquiring sinners of the day of Pentecost? "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." What was the answer of God to Saul, inquiring what He would have him do? "Arise,

and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." How was Cornelius received into the Christian fold? "Who can forbid water that these may be baptized?" How did the Ethiopian Treasurer make profession of the faith, which the Deacon Philip taught him? "See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Surely I need tell no other instances, to prove that the first profession of the Saviour before men is in the Sacrament of holy baptism. Who is there here, that hath not been baptized himself, that hath not brought his children to be baptized? Let him ponder well these things. And let him remember, that when the Lord opened Lydia's heart, she was baptized, and her household: and, that when the jailer of Philippi had believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, "he was baptized, he, and all his, straightway."

But baptism is the beginning, only, of the Christian life. It must go on and grow. It only can do so, by the influence of the Divine and Holy Spirit. To all who should repent and be baptized, this gift was promised by St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost. Whether the infant of an hour, or the old man who has outlived fourscore, the gift of the Holy Ghost must be received for the continuance of the life, begun in holy baptism. And in its reception, the profession of the Saviour before men is solemnly renewed. So it was in Samaria, when, after the men and women had been baptized by Philip, one of the first Deacons, Peter and John, Apostles, went to them, to lay their hands on them that they might receive the Holy Ghost.

So it was, that when St. Paul had found at Ephesus, twelve of the disciples of St. John the Baptist, and had baptized them in the name and faith of Jesus, he laid his hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And so it was, that the Apostle to the Hebrews, when he enumerates the principles of Christian doctrine, arranges them as follows : “repentance from dead works, faith toward God, the doctrine of baptisms, and of the laying on of hands.” In Confirmation, the baptized Christian renews again his first profession of the Saviour before men.

“ ’Tis done ; the great transaction’s done :
Deign, gracious Lord, to keep me Thine ;
Help me, through grace, to follow on ;
Glad to confess Thy voice, divine.”

And this is not the end. The gracious Lover and Saviour of our souls still loved them, to the last. And in the night, when He went out to be betrayed and die, He instituted in His Blood, a solemn memory of His atonement for all sin : “Take, eat ; this is my body. Drink ye all of this ; for this is my blood, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of your sins. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the breaking of this bread, the first three thousand constantly professed their Saviour before men. In that holy Sacrament, all, who from day to day were added to the Lord, made their profession in His name. At Troas, when the faithful met the Apostle on the Lord’s day, it was to break that bread. And he sums it all up in fewest, plainest words, in writing to the Church of Corinth :

“for we being many, are one bread, and one body ; for we are all partakers of that one bread.”

“ My God, and is Thy table spread ?
 And does Thy cup with love o’erflow ?
 Thither be all Thy children led,
 And let them Thy sweet mercies know.
 Hail ! sacred feast ! which Jesus makes ;
 Rich banquet of His flesh and blood,
 Thrice happy he who here partakes
 That sacred stream, that heavenly food.”

Baptized into the triune Name, and so made children of the Father, confirmed in grace and holiness by the transforming Spirit, and feeding in their hearts upon the Spiritual Body of the Incarnate Son, through faith which is in Him, the followers of Jesus, in the new life of righteousness and holiness, profess continually the Saviour of their love ; and walking in the light as He is in the light, make known to all, in works of piety, and ways of love, that they have been with Jesus, and reflect the brightness of His countenance. “Called according to God’s purpose, by His Spirit working in due season, they, through grace, obey the calling ; they be justified freely ; they be made sons of God, by adoption ; they be made like the image of His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ ; they walk religiously in good works ; and at length by God’s mercy they attain to everlasting felicity.”

“ They with unwearied step shall tread
 The path of life divine ;
 With growing ardour onward move ;
 With growing brightness shine.

On eagles' wings, they mount, they soar,
 On wings of faith and love;
 Till, past the sphere of earth and sin,
 They rise to heaven above."

Mother, to whom God has granted in the answer to your prayers, children of love and hope, have you not owned the Saviour's name upon them, as the tribute and token of your gratitude? Bring them without delay to the regenerating font, that they may take that sign, to which alone the victory is sure. Young women and young men, have you not yet renewed the vows which made you Christ's, in holy baptism? Delay no more. But in the fresh and fragrant beauty of your youth, receive the laying on of hands, as your profession of your Saviour before men. And you who have not yet availed you of the Children's privilege, to eat the Children's bread, Come in the prime of life, come in its sere and yellow leaf, come while the almond tree is blooming, and at the Father's table, make profession of the Suffering Son. And all of every age, who seek Salvation through the Cross, present yourselves, your souls and bodies, a living sacrifice; acceptable to God. So shall you own the Saviour before men. So shall He own you at the last before His Father which is in heaven. To-day He calls you to Himself. To-morrow may be all too late.

SERMON II.

OBEDIENCE, THE KEY TO SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE.

ST. JOHN VII. 17.—If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.

THAT the religion of Jesus Christ does not prevail more widely ; that, where it is professed, it has not more entire control ; that intellectual men so often disregard its claims ; are objections often urged against its claim of heavenly origin. The attempt at argument is often stated thus : If God should speak to man, would He not speak so that man could not misunderstand ? If understood, would He not certainly be obeyed ? And would not they, whose intellectual powers have placed them nearest to Himself, be surest to understand Him, and foremost to obey. Would God, that it were so ! That all who hear the Gospel would believe it and obey it. That they, to whom He has most richly given the treasures of the mind were foremost to confess and to adore the Giver ! But, surely, that it is not so, cannot be brought against the Gospel, when it says expressly, “that though many are called, few are chosen ;” while the record

of St. Paul is read, "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called;" and while his plain and positive injunction stands, "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise": let him learn that wisdom which the world calls foolishness, that so he may be wise unto salvation. But the Christian Advocate may not be content to put himself thus, merely, on the defensive. He must not merely say, that, on the ground thus stated, there lies no true exception to the divine original of his religion. He must contend that this is just the natural conclusion from the given premises. That the alleged rejection of Christianity is among the strongest arguments for its truth. That, were it otherwise, it would be self-condemned. For mark the whole connection. It is the first lesson of the Gospel, that man is morally disordered, is disinclined to duty; seeks the evil, spurns the good. But the Gospel is a moral revelation; a revelation of duty; a revelation to resist the evil and choose the good. Now, if man naturally received it, it would prove that he was not a fallen being; or else, that it made compromise with evil.

But it is not enough that we thus merely vindicate the truth and holiness of God, who would have all men to be saved. Error there is, in the world. Unbelief there is, in the world. Rejection and contempt of God's word, as may comport with inclination, or appearances, or expediency. And this too often among

them, from whom, if wisdom after this world were not foolishness with God, better things might be expected. It becomes a serious question, then, what is the great prevailing obstacle, by which the due reception of God's word is hindered; and what is the process, by which, with greatest certainty, the knowledge of His truth may be attained. The text supplies the answer to these questions. Jesus was teaching in the Temple. The Jews, who heard Him, were astonished. "How knoweth this man letters, having never been instructed?" "My doctrine," He replied, "is not mine, but His, that sent Me;" a lesson taught by none, but God. And if any man, whosoever he may be, how humble soever, in human estimation, how uninstructed soever, in human learning, be willing, always, and at all hazards, to do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God: to his obedient heart, the demonstration of the Spirit shall approve it to have come from God. To make it plain, and personal, and practical. Whosoever is disposed to do the will of God; is serious and in earnest about religion; is desirous to receive its doctrines, that he may be saved; is determined to obey the truth, in the subjection of his heart and the direction of his life; he shall have demonstration of the doctrine; he shall be convinced by it, led by it, saved by it. On the other hand. Whosoever approaches the Scriptures from curiosity merely, and with indifference; with a heart, enslaved by the world, occupied by prejudice, lorded over by a proud, an angry, or an uncharitable spirit; re-

lying on intellect and learning, rather than on prayer and obedience; with a secret purpose to embrace only that which agrees with preconceived notions, and to do that which comports with individual inclination; instead of believing all that God hath taught, and doing all that God shall command, he cannot "know of the doctrine," he cannot rightly estimate the teachings of the Gospel; he cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.

To the question, What is the chief hindrance to the due reception of God's word; what the prevailing obstacle to the reception of its saving knowledge as revealed in Jesus; the answer, therefore, is distinct and clear. It is not the want of convincing evidence; but of a disposition to be convinced. The unbelief and the dead faith which are in the world are not from want of evidence. We see men every day, in matters of the highest moment, controlled by evidence far less conclusive. I might say, infinitely less so. In the affairs of business, in the negotiations of commerce, in treaties of state, reliance has to be upon a bit of perishable paper, upon a signature that may be forged, upon a seal that may be counterfeited, upon the promise of a man who may lie, or upon the witness of men who may deceive or be deceived. How different the testimony upon which the truths of Christianity demand reception. God is their Author. And the impress, which the earth bears that He made, the heavens, that He spread out, the sea, to which He gave bounds, is

legible, in lines of light, upon them all. Holy men of old moved by the Holy Ghost proclaimed them, first; and, all along the tract of ages radiant prophecies sprang into fulfilment, to confirm their truth. His blessed Son descended, to establish and confirm them. And the broad seal of heaven, in miracles and signs and wonders—heaven opened, the earth shaken, the grave spoiled—is set to their divine original. Strange, indeed, that “the witness of men” should be received; and God’s testimony, infinitely greater, fail to produce conviction! And there is a proof,—even more conclusive than all these, that it is not want of evidence that limits the constraining power of Christianity, to change the heart,—in this, that there are multitudes of those who know that it is true, who yet refuse to own its power. There is but one solution. They want the disposition to be convinced. They do not practically know the doctrine to be of God, because they are not willing to do His will. It was because the heathen did not like to retain God in their knowledge, that He gave them over, as St. Paul declares, to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient. And it is because men, now, like not its humbling, sanctifying influences, that they resist the Gospel in its saving power. This is in strict accordance with the frame of nature, and with all experience. Bare, abstract, truth, the theorems of Euclid or the propositions of Plato, may be received alike by virtuous or vicious minds. They require no preparation of the heart, as they work in it no change. But the instructions of mo-

rality and the precepts of religion have respect to duty, and are designed to rule the life. What they enjoin, requires assent or dissent. They are rejected or received as the heart aspires to virtue, or gravitates to vice. Of this, the heathen moralists were well aware. Aristotle required, in his student of Ethics, a virtuous disposition; and taught that wickedness impaired the judging faculty. When Zoroaster's scholars asked him, what they should do, to get winged souls, to soar aloft into the bright atmosphere of truth, he replied that they should bathe themselves in the waters of life. To their inquiry, what these were, he replied, The four Cardinal virtues; which are the four rivers of Paradise. "Every man," says Jeremy Taylor, "understands by his affections, more than by his reason." "A covetous man understands nothing to be good, that is not profitable; and a voluptuous man likes your reasoning well enough, if you discourse of the pleasures of sense;" "but if you talk to him of the melancholy lectures of the Cross," "the peace of meekness and the joys of the Holy Ghost," "he knows not what you mean." And the same admirable Author, describing the social influences of religion upon the good and bad, who read the same Scriptures, hear the same sermons, have understandings equally capable, and speculatively believe alike, yet with results in practice so unlike, thus states the reason of the difference; "the one understands by nature, the other by grace; the one by human learning, the other by divine; the one as a son of man, the other as a son of God; the one perceives by the proportions

of the world, the other by the measures of the Spirit; the one comprehends by reason, and the other by love." "And," he continues, "as was rarely well observed by St. Paul, while knowledge puffeth up, charity edifieth. Love makes the best Scholars. No sermons can edify, no Scriptures can build you up, a holy building to the Lord, unless the love of God be in your hearts, and purify your souls from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit."

From what has thus been said as to the chief hindrance to the saving knowledge of the truth, we readily infer the state of mind best fitted to ensure it. As he that is not willing to do the will of God cannot know of the doctrine, so he that is resolved to do it shall surely find the knowledge of it. In other words, a pious and submissive spirit is the key to the knowledge of divine truth. And, for this, there are two reasons; its own natural efficiency, and the promised blessing of God. In its natural tendencies, there is great value. It ensures attention. It arouses diligence. It sustains perseverance. Difficulties are surmounted. Decisions are weighed. Error is retracted. Truth is steadfastly maintained. And, added to all this, there is the promised blessing. "If any of you lack wisdom," says St. James, "let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." "The true Christian," says learned Cudworth, "is not he that is only book-taught, but he that is God-taught; he that has an unction from the Holy One, that teacheth him all things; he

that has the Spirit of Christ within him, searching out the deep things of God ; for, as no man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man, which is in him, even so the things of God knoweth none, but the Spirit of God." "This Spirit," he continues, "we shall not meet with, but in the way of obedience. The knowledge of Christ and the keeping of His commandments, the understanding of his doctrine and the willingness to do the will of God, must always go together." And it must be so. If you would go on to know, you must go on to do, the will of God. That profound submission, that prostration of the heart and mind which instantly obey whatever comes from God, is the best possible preparation to find and know the truth. It is in Boyle, and Bacon, and Pascal, and Newton, that we find the happiest illustrations of this remark. To a grasp of intellect, beyond the proudest of their fellows, they added the profoundest reverence and humility. "I have more understanding," says royal David, "than all my teachers ; for Thy testimonies are my meditation." "I am wiser than the aged ; because I keep Thy precepts." Let us pursue this heavenly wisdom. We are not so much to study it, as to live ourselves into it. It is to come in, through the heart, rather than through the head. "I have heard of some," one says, with quaint simplicity, that, in their latter years, through the feebleness of their limbs, have been compelled to study on their knees ; and, I think, it might well become the youngest and strongest to adopt it." Let us more and more endeavour to live the life, which

we now live, by the faith, and in the obedience, of the Son of God. Knowing religion the better, we shall love it the more ; and loving it the more, we shall pursue it the more devotedly ; till attaining its full perfection, we attain at once the perfection of our knowledge, and of our happiness.

How beautiful the divine condescension to our infirmity, which is exhibited in these aspects of our religion ! If proficiency in spiritual knowledge, as in secular, had depended upon splendid talents, how many humble souls must have gone mourning, all their days. If subtle science, and deep learning had been necessary, to find the way of duty and of life, what added bitterness had drugged the cup of poverty ! If vigorous virtue, and unblemished purity, and an unflinching steadfastness were the sole passport to the saving knowledge of the Gospel, how few could cross its threshold ! But He remembers that we are but dust. The wish to serve Him is revealed, with the knowledge of His truth. The humblest soul, that brings a willing heart to do the will of God, shall know of all His doctrines ; and to him the glorious Gospel of the blessed God shall be revealed, in all its truth and power. “ If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.” “ If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.”

Now, count His train, to-day,
And, who may meet Him learn ;

Him, child-like sires, meek maidens find ;
Where pride can naught discern.

Still, to the lowly soul
He doth Himself impart ;
And, for His cradle and His throne
Chooseth the pure in heart.

SERMON III.

GOD'S IMAGE AND SUPERScription.

ST. MATTHEW XXII. 20.—Whose is this image and superscription?

COINAGE is a prerogative of sovereignty. It is, everywhere, the subject of severe restrictions. And, under our government, is among the Constitutional powers, reserved to Congress. In royal countries the current coin bears, commonly, a portrait of the reigning monarch, or his arms, or both. It was so with the penny, in the context. “Whose is this image?” “Cæsar’s.”

The Saviour of the world was set about, with “enemies, persecutors and slanderers.” Nothing, that he did, that was not misrepresented. Nothing, that he said, that some one did not labour to pervert. As Herod and Pontius Pilate could, afterwards, suspend their mutual enmity, to make a common enemy, of Him; so, before that, strange alliances were formed, in hope to injure Him. The context furnishes an instance. The Pharisees, whose favour, with the people, He disturbed, were anxious, for His ruin. “Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel, how they might entangle Him, in His talk.” They laid a skilful plot. And, to

accomplish it, they made a compact with their natural enemies, the partisans of their oppressor Herod. "And they sent out, unto Him, their disciples, with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth; neither carest Thou for any man; for Thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what thinkest Thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?" On the one hand the Herodians held that the Roman rule, among the Jews, was lawful; which, on the other hand, the Pharisees denied. They, thus, supposed that they had fastened Him between the horns of a dilemma. If he said, *Yes*, the Jews would be incensed against him, as a traitor to their Nation. If he said, *No*, the Herodians would inform against Him, as seditious, towards the empire. "But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute-money. And they brought unto Him a penny. And He said unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto Him, Cæsar's." Now the legend was, CÆSAR AUGUSTUS; JUDÆA CAPTIVE. "Then saith He unto them, Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and, unto God, the things that are God's." "Our Lord," says learned Dr. Hales, in his analysis of chronology, "here baffles the malignant proposers of the question, by taking advantage of their own concession, that the *denarius* bore the emperor's image and superscription; and, also, of the determination of their own schools, that, wherever any king's coin was current, it

was a proof of that country's subjection, to his government. He significantly warns these turbulent and seditious demagogues, the Pharisees, to render unto Cæsar the dues of Cæsar, which they resisted; and these licentious and irreligious courtiers, the Herodians, to render, unto God, the dues of God, which they neglected; thus publicly reproofing both; but, obliquely, in a way that they could not take hold of." We cannot wonder, at the following record. "When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left Him, and went their way."

I do not raise, to-day, the question of rendering, unto Cæsar, the things, which are Cæsar's. That we all owe to that well constituted government, which is ours, by birth or choice, the duty of obedience and submission, there is no one, here, that will deny. Important, as this is, and clearly binding on our consciences, as Christians, as much as on our loyalty, as citizens, there is a higher question, far, which claims our notice; which reaches all, of every nation, and of every kindred; and will still be vital, when the governments of earth, whatever be their names or forms, shall all be merged, in the one glorious kingdom of the Son of God. To every moral creature of God's hand, the immortal coinage of the King of Heaven, in reference to himself, not only, but to all the gifts, which he enjoys from God, the question of the text directs itself, "Whose is this image and superscription?" And, when he answers, "God's;" the clear, inevitable conclusion has to follow, "Render, therefore," "unto God, the things,

that are God's." Whether it be the outer world, that we contemplate; or man's moral and immortal nature; or his condition, as redeemed, in Christ; the question, "whose is this image and superscription?" must be answered, *God's*; and the just conclusion must irresistibly ensue, "Render, therefore, unto God, the things that are God's."

I. Look at the world, without, and at man's physical and intellectual nature, as connected with it. The earth, the air, the sea, the sky. How various! How marvellous! What adaptation! What subjection, to the creature, who was made, to be their Lord. Who could have poised the mountains, on their bases? Who could have tempered, so, the elements, that make the air, that it should serve a sleeping infant, for its breath; and, yet, be capable of hurricanes and of tornadoes? The mystery of water; so soft, so delicate, so yielding, to the slightest touch; and, yet, with power, to rend the rocks, and shake the deep foundations of the earth. The "brave o'erhanging firmament," with all its beauties, and with all its wonders; "Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the South;" cycle on epicycle, orb in orb; stars, that have burned their fires, all out; stars, of whose virgin light, the eye of man has caught as yet no glimpse; though travelling towards it from the day that they were hung in heaven. The sense, that serves to scan their magnitudes, and mark their revolutions, and map out their worlds. The mind, that measures them; that weighs them; that

computes their orbits; that calculates their rates of revolution; that foretells their transits, their conjunctions, their oppositions; that discovered Herschel; that disentangled Saturn from his ring; that detected Neptune, by the perturbation of his influence. Deserts converted, into gardens. The interchange of climes which commerce has achieved. The ocean, made the highway of humanity. The electric circle, compassing the earth, while Ariel was starting with his girdle. The comforts and charities of home. The triumphs of Science. The witcheries of Art. All that adorns, that dignifies, that beautifies, consoles and charms. "Whose is this image and superscription?" And where are they, that, in the joy, with which they lay its costliest trophies, on His altar, undividing, unreserving, unregretting, as the gift of charity, or in the work of piety, "render unto God," in very deed, and with exulting heart, "the things that are God's!"

II. Consider, next, man's moral and immortal nature; all that remains, or is restored, to him, of his Godlikeness, since the Fall. The mirror of the soul, which, clouded, as it is, and flawed, suffices, still, to reflect, in some degree, of its fair beauty, and divine proportions, the glorious image of the Godhead. That upward struggle, like the water, towards its head, which living man can never wholly lose; the proof of his celestial origin. The faith, that feels for the invisible. The hope, that springs, immortal. The love, that never dies; that disregards all space, all time; that has the

more, the more it gives; and is the more, the less it keeps. The checks of conscience. The intuitions of the immaterial. The instinctive intimations of immortality. "Whose is this image and superscription?" And where are they, who own it, in the struggle with the flesh, the wrestling with the world, the war with Satan, to the knife, by which alone the life of holiness can be attempted? Who, in their martyr deaths and still more in their martyr lives, of self denial, self control, self dedication, self devotion, attest their kindred with the God, whose name is love; and win new measures of His mercy, as they make new experience of His truth?

III. Contemplate his condition, finally, as he is redeemed in Jesus Christ. The inconceivable mystery of the Incarnation. The weariness, and painfulness, and watchings, and fastings, the sighs, the groans, the tears, of that heart-breaking humiliation. The sacrificial Cross. The agonizing Victim. The streaming blood. Darkness at noon. The earth shaken. Rending rocks. Yawning graves. Dead arisen. God propitiated. The world redeemed. Man reconciled. Pardon, for sin. Victory, over death. Power, to become the sons of God. A new birth. A new creation. A new life. "Whose is this image and superscription?" And where are they, who, with the sign of it, upon their brow, receive it into their hearts, and write it upon their lives; being made God's children, by adoption and grace, approve themselves His children, in their

likeness to their Father; and, being renewed, in the spirit of their minds, show forth, in new and holy lives, the power of the redeeming and transforming Cross?

“Whose is this image and superscription?” *It is a thought for the young.* Their souls are fresh, from the creating Mint. They are the newest coinage of the Crown. The sacred legend and device, on them, are fresh and sharp. Their gold is not yet dim. Shall they not keep it pure? Shall violence deface God's image, on their hearts? Shall selfishness corrode it? Shall it be stained by sensuality? Shall it rust, in sluggishness? Shall it be lost, through sin?

“Oh, in the morn of life, when youth,
With vital ardour, glows,
And shines, in all the fairest charms,
That beauty can disclose;
Deep, in thy soul, before its powers
Are yet, by vice, enslaved,
Be thy Creator's glorious name,
And character engraved.”

“Whose is this image and superscription?” *It is a thought for mourners, by their dead.* Feed not so eagerly, beloved, on the confined beauty of thy darling, that has fallen asleep, in Jesus. Nor kiss that infant brow, sad mother, with such passionate fondness, as if it were the last. Not even the bodies of the saints, are death's. They rose, with Jesus, on that Easter morning; when not Mary Magdalene, herself, knew Him, in all His resurrection-loveliness. Their very hairs are numbered. No thread, of all their gold, no flake, of all

their snow, not the spring bloom of the young child, nor yet the winter blossoms of the aged man, shall perish, in the grave. "It is sown in corruption;" it shall be "raised in glory." "It is sown in weakness;" it shall be "raised in power."

"The graves of all His saints, He blessed,
When, in the grave, He lay;
And, rising, thence, their hopes He raised,
To everlasting day."

"Whose is this image and superscription?" *It is a thought for the Judgment day.* What, if, before the throne, a mirror stand, which shall reflect, on every sinner's soul, the spiritual brightness and immortal beauty, which his sinfulness has marred, in him? What if he see, at once, the loathsome ugliness of his lost nature; and the glorious image, which, the new birth of the Cross renewed in him; and made his own, if he but would, through grace, forever? How should the contrast agonize his spirit, with that fell remorse, which still shall gather fury, through eternity! How shall he then exclaim, with vain regrets, that shall but echo, through eternal ages, with no answer of compassion from the disregarded Cross, "Oh wretched man, that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!"

"There is a death, whose pang
Outlasts the fleeting breath;
Oh, what eternal horrors hang,
Around the second death!"

"Whose is this image and superscription?" *It is a*

thought, for heaven. There, godliness shall be godlikeness. For love shall reproduce, in hearts, that love, the glorious image of the Beloved. As loving Mary had looked up, into the face of Jesus, till she caught its heavenly beauty; and made hers, "that good part," which she could not lose. As penitential David could find comfort, in his secret sorrows, in the thought, "As for me, I will behold Thy face, in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness." And, as beloved John has written, for our comfort, who believe in Jesus, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him, as He is."

"Thy presence beams eternal day,
O'er all the blissful place;
Who would not drop this load of clay,
And die, to see Thy face?"

SERMON IV.

SALVATION, PERSONAL, COSTLY, DIFFICULT.

ST. LUKE XIII. 23.—Lord, are there few, that be saved?

THIS is a startling question. And, the longer it is dwelt on, the more startling it becomes. And the answer to it is more startling, still. Let us look into it, a little, to-day. We are gathered, here, for awhile, from the world; to hear of God, and of the soul, and of eternity. That our assembling of ourselves together be not worse than in vain, let us pursue, for a few moments the question, in the text, “Lord, are there few, that be saved?”

“Lord, are there few, that be saved?” It is a startling question! It forces in upon us the fearful fact, that all will not be saved. How few men realize it. They do not like to. It runs counter to their comfort. It disturbs their self-complacency. It raises a doubt, where they would feel secure. It forces every man to ask himself the question, which, indeed, should be the question of the text, Shall I be saved? If all are to be saved, I shall be. But, if not all, then, am I one of them that shall? And, then, the question takes an as-

pect, still more startling. If not saved, then, what? Must not, not saved, mean lost? Shall I be lost? Lost, to peace? Lost, to happiness? Lost, to heaven? Lost, to God? Lost, here? Lost, hereafter? Lost, forever? My brethren, what a startling question! The mere suggestion of it is appalling. Lord, are there many, that will be lost? Will the most be lost? And am I to be? Or, to come nearer to the point, what is my trust, that I shall not be?

And, now, to follow this inquiry out, among the analogies of Holy Scripture. "In Adam, all died." Left, as the Fall left us, all of us are lost. That any of us are not, is of God's great mercy, in Christ Jesus. Now, trace, from the beginning, the line of God's transactions with mankind, redeemed in Jesus Christ. The Flood is threatened, when His mercy, to the sinful race, was quite exhausted. "Lord, are there few, that be saved?" Eight, only, of the human race! Six hundred thousand of God's people, crossed the Red Sea, on the way toward the Promised Land. "Lord, are there few, that be saved?" Two, only, Caleb and Joshua, were permitted to enter it! Even, Moses, did but get the sight of it. The wickedness of the cities of the plain brings down the wrath of God, on them, in fire. "Lord, are there few, that be saved?" Lot, only, and his daughters were delivered! The analogies of Holy Scripture do not encourage the belief, that many will be saved. The long-suffering of God, is not, as some count, slackness. His Spirit will not always strive with man. "But the day of the Lord will come, as a

thief in the night, in the which, the heavens shall pass away, with a great noise, and the elements shall melt, with fervent heat; the earth, also, and the works, that are therein, shall be burned up." "Lord, are there few, that be saved?" "Alas, who shall live, when God doeth this?"

Our Lord was journeying towards Jerusalem; and teaching, through the cities and villages, as He went. We know not what led to it. A parable it may be, such as that of the tares and the wheat. Or a denunciation of self-righteousness and its delusions, such as He often hurled, against the Pharisees. Or a description of the awful judgment, such as that recorded, by St. Matthew. We know not what it was. But, one, who heard him, perhaps more thoughtful than the rest, and more impressed with the reality of truth, said unto Him, "Lord, are there few, that be saved?" Is Salvation, really, so difficult? Are sinners, really, so likely to be lost? "Lord, *are* there few, that be saved?" Jesus did not reply directly. The indirectness of an answer is often more instructive, than its terms. It may discourage; censure; reprove. As if the question were unfit. At least unprofitable. It was so, in this instance. As if the Saviour said, do not concern yourself about how many! Do not inquire about your neighbours! Ask, rather, how shall *I* be saved! "And he said unto them"—not to the asker of the question; but to all who heard it—"Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

SALVATION IS A PERSONAL CONCERN ;

IT WAS OF COSTLY AND DIFFICULT ATTAINMENT ;

IT CAN BE SECURED, BY NONE, BUT THROUGH EXERTION,
TO THE UTMOST.

I. *Salvation is a personal concern.* It is true, that Jesus Christ tasted death, for every man ; and gave Himself a ransom, for all. So that every sinner is redeemed. It is true, that the Church is His body ; and that all, who, in holy baptism, have been made its members, have promise of Salvation, through His merits. But, it is also true, that every heart must make Salvation personal, by faith, and penitence, and holiness, and piety, and charity. “There are but few to be saved,” says Massillon, in one of his most celebrated sermons, “because only two classes can be ; those, who have kept their innocence ; or those who, having lost it, have retrieved it, in the agonies of penitence. Heaven is opened, only to the pure, and to the penitent. Which of these are you ? Are you pure ? Or are you penitent ? Nothing unclean can enter into the kingdom of heaven. You must carry there an unlost purity ; or, else, a purity retrieved.” Salvation is thus personal. Jesus Christ could die for us. Repent for us, He cannot. That is the hard and bitter work of each particular heart ; which knows its sinfulness ; which feels its sorrowfulness ; which yearns for purity ; which owns each separate sin, and bears it, bending, to the Cross ; and, in a child’s humility, and tenderheartedness, and anxiousness to be restored, lays it down there, with tears of sorrow and of shame ; and begs for, and obtains, for-

givenness ; and there is joy, for it, in heaven. Beware of the delusion, my beloved, that men sin, in general. That they are transgressors, in common. That the multitude lessens the guilt. That the judgment will be administered, in classes. And a general average struck ; in which justice will be lost, in mercy. No, my beloved. However great the multitude, that shall stand up, before that awful bar, the Judge will deal with each particular man. Nay, each particular sinner ; his sins recalled to mind, at that dread instant, as all the deeds of their past lives, to drowning men, will pass his judgment, on himself. Then, all hearts will be open. Then, all deeds will be known. Then, no secrets can be hid. And, then, upon each trembling sinner, as he gazes on the judgment seat, and feels himself riveted to it, by the very aspect of its terrors, that steadfast eye shall seem to turn, and look, as once it did, on Peter ; not, like that sad human glance, to melt the heart, to tears and penitence ; but, to go with it, in reproving anger, through the endless ages, of a shame, that cannot blush, of a sorrow, that cannot weep, and of a sinfulness, incapable of repentance. Lord, are there many, can there be many, that are saved ?

II. But, while, *Salvation* is, thus, a personal concern, *it was of costly and difficult attainment.* The cost of a thing is the admitted measure of its worth. The cost of some princely mansion which Sarsaparilla has set up. The cost of the Crown Jewels of the British Queen. The cost of the War in the Crimea. It is the standard

to which all things are instinctively referred. And there may be that which costs so much, that but one can be. It was so with human souls. Whoever wrote that remarkable Psalm, the 49th, seemed to be groping after this great thought, when he says, "They that trust in wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, none of them can, by any means, redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; for it costs more to redeem their souls, so that he must let that alone, forever." Micah yearns over it, in these affecting words: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgressions, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" And even our blessed Lord but hints at it, when He says, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" More than the world; more than all worlds; the Maker of all worlds yielded Himself for its redemption. Each separate soul was purchased by the blood of God. My brethren, what a fearful sentence. And yet it is the fearfulness of truth. As, to compare two texts, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." And, again, "The Lamb shall overcome them; for He is Lord of lords." Is it not true that our Salvation *was* costly and of difficult attainment? When, from the Cross, He says, "Look

unto me, and be ye saved all ye ends of the earth ; for I am God ; and there is none else ? ” When from beneath the Cross, Paul says, to the Ephesian elders ; “ Feed the flock of *God* which *He* hath purchased with His own blood ? ”

III. So much it cost to redeem our souls. At such a price, Salvation was made possible. And, yet, *it can be secured by none, but through exertion, to the utmost.* “ Lord, are there few, that be saved ? And He said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate ; for many I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” This is one of the few instances, in which our translation falls far short of the original. The literal meaning is “ Strain every nerve,” more literally, “ agonize to enter in at the strait gate ; for many I say unto you will seek to enter in and shall not be able.”

Dear brethren, this is a very serious business. We have but one life to live. It may be, no one knows, how short. We have but one death to die. It may be, no one knows, how soon. When the life is passed, and the death suffered, eternity is all that will be left. Eternity, with God, in bliss ; or else, without Him, in intolerable wretchedness. Now the gate which leads to God is narrow. It is as much as any one can do to pass it. No one can pass it, with the world. No one can pass it, with his sins. No one can pass it, in the flesh. It was entirely closed to all the race. But, Jesus opened it, upon the Cross, to all believers. But opened it, so narrowly, that they who pass it, must

strain every nerve to do it; and agonize in its accomplishment. A racer does it. A boxer does it. Thousands of soldiers at Sebastopol have done it. But it is hard to do. And you, my brethren, do not do it, and you do not mean to. You expect to be saved at your ease. You expect to be saved in your self-indulgence. You expect to be saved in your self-conceit. You expect to be saved in your worldly mindedness. You expect to be saved in your uncharitableness. "Jesus has died for me," you say. "The way to heaven is opened, to believers; I believe; and, so, am saved." Ah, my beloved, you will find the gate, too narrow, for your carelessness. You will find the gate too narrow for your thoughtlessness. You will find the gate too narrow for your selfishness. You will find the gate too narrow for your worldliness. You will find the gate too narrow for your unlovingness. One will present himself at it, with all his money hoarded up. Jesus will say unto him "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." One will present himself at it, with all the pomp and pride of ease and luxury and self-indulgence. Jesus will say unto him, "Son, remember that thou in thy life-time, receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now, he is comforted and thou art tormented." One will present himself at it, with his envious eye, with his censorious tongue, with his malignant heart. Jesus will say unto him, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not; for of *such* is the king-

dom of heaven." Lord, are there any that shall be saved? Beloved, if we must answer honestly, it must be feared, but very few. Who knows so well as Jesus Christ? Who did for it, what He did? Who else was crucified for us? And yet, he says, "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction; and many there be, which go in thereat; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it." Dear brethren, is it not literally so? Are not the many, seekers of their own? Are not the many, lovers of pleasures? Are not the many, hasting to be rich? Is it popular to be self-denying? Is it popular to be poor? Is it popular, to be humble and patient and forgiving? Do you not meanly look up to the rich? Do you not pay craven court to them that lead the fashions? Is not the broad way thronged? Are not they who turn from it, deemed singular, affected, superstitious, fanatical? How few there are, to sell what they have, and give to the poor! How few there are, to take patiently the spoiling of their goods! How few there are, that being reviled, revile not again! How few there are, that deny themselves, and take up the Cross, and follow Christ! Dear brethren, it was a Jewish fallacy, that there were to be two Christs; a suffering, and a triumphant. Are there not Christians, who, still, count on it? Are there not Christians, who expect to find a royal road to heaven? Are there not Christians, who rely on being saved, through Christ; and, yet, not crucified, with Him? And are not you among them,

who sit, here, unconscious of the Cross ; regardless of it ; unimpressed by it ; and not ashamed to be ashamed of it ? Oh, how the death-bed will disabuse you of all this ! Oh, how the grave will undeceive you ! Oh, how the resurrection-trumpet will astonish you ! Oh, how the judgment throne will overwhelm you ! “ Lord, are there few, that be saved ? ” Lord, are there any to be saved ? “ Oh Lord, if thou shouldest mark iniquities, who should stand ? ” In his own righteousness, not one. And only they, in His who died for us, who take His Cross, and follow after Him, and agonize, with penitential patience through the Strait gate, and along the narrow, steep and unfrequented way that leadeth unto life.

SERMON V.

THE LORD'S SIDE.

EXODUS XXXII. 26.—Who is on the Lord's side?

To take sides is universal, with mankind. Sides, in war. Sides, in politics. Sides, in art. Sides, in whatever admits a difference of opinion. That it must be so in that which is man's chief concern, is obvious. The one great question, for humanity to ask, is that which Moses has presented in the text, Who is on the Lord's side? Beloved, I address it to you all, as ye would answer it if this day were your last, Who is on the Lord's side?

When men take sides, in any question of controlling interest, they take the side's name with it. This we are all familiar with. It is so with our political parties. It is so with schools of philosophy. It finds its place even in matters of taste. How much more must it be so, in religion! Whoever is on the Lord's side, is to take His name. "The disciples were called Christians, first, at Antioch." "Then Agrippa said, unto Paul, Almost, thou persuadest me to be a Christian." And to the Bishop of the Church in Sardis, St. John, from

Patmos, writes, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God; and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven, from my God; and I will write upon him My new name." In our familiar words, he shall be called, a Christian and a Churchman. Beloved, have you made these sacred names your own? Are you entitled to the venerable name of Christian? Who among you is on the Lord's side?

When men, in taking sides on any great prevailing question, associate themselves, with others, for its furtherance, they own their allegiance in the way which is appointed for its profession. No one expects reception on any other terms; much less expects to dictate for himself the mode of his admission. When God would make a covenant with Abraham, and appoint him heir in trust of all the promises of Christ, He instituted in his flesh, the ordinance of circumcision: and, from that time, none could be received in any other way, as sons of faithful Abraham. Our Lord, Himself, when He took Abraham's seed, took it on Abraham's terms; and with the circumcision which began in him, two thousand years before, took the name Jesus; as the angel had before announced to Mary. The way in which men now are added to the Lord is holy baptism. The Jordan in which Jesus was baptized, flows out, and on, through all the ages, and in all the world. And that is still proclaimed, which Peter answered to

the anxious crowd that asked, with yearning agony, "What shall we do?" "Repent and be baptized." And that is still repeated, everywhere, which was recorded there, "Then they that gladly received His word, *were* baptized." Beloved, who among you is on the Lord's side?

Men, that take sides in any leading question, bear the badge that it adopts. You see this everywhere. The banner of a clan, the insignia of an order, the ribbon or the ring that marks an office, are the appeal to sense. And the appeal to sense is universal. Now the badge of Christians is the Cross. It is signed in baptism on their foreheads. It is preached continually, in all their ears. It lays itself, a daily burden, on their hearts and lives. It is not a mere figure. It is not all a name. It is not just an ornament. It is a sad, a serious, a solemn thing, the Cross. It crosses interest. It crosses pleasure. It crosses honour. It crosses will. It crosses nature, all. It is a Cross to crucify. And crucifixion is the hardest thing! Beloved, do you bear the Cross? Are you upon the Lord's side?

Men that take sides, on any question, are tenacious of its principles. The world despises halfway men. And trimmers are in universal detestation. Free traders, protectionists, Union men, disunionists: all people of whatever party stand by their principles. And, stand, themselves; as they stand by them. It is what St. Jude meant, "Earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints." It is what St. Paul meant, "Hold fast the form of sound words." It is what St.

Peter and St. John meant, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." Not to know in whom you have believed; not to endure sound doctrine; not to search the Scriptures; and not to hear the Church: how is this to sustain the holy name whereby ye have been called? How is this to be on the Lord's side?

Men, that take sides in human questions, are known to do so by their practice. They follow closely on their leaders' steps. They go together as one man. They are observant of every rule. They conform to every precedent. They are consistent in minutest ceremonies. They are vigilant. They are energetic. They are unreserving of their time, their money, and their strength. They do their utmost to enlist others. They make no compromise with the indifferent. They give no quarter to the enemy. Their heart is in their work; and their whole man goes with it. Ye that but half profess the glorious vocation whereunto ye have been called; ye that but linger at the vestibule with eye and heart turned back upon the world; ye that separate from your brethren who at the Saviour's bidding come to feed upon the banquet of this most heavenly food; ye that are careless in your life and conversation; ye that are seeking how your service of the Lord shall cost you least; ye that are harbouring the uncharitable thought, or holding back from the unstinted unreserve of love; ye that are Christians in your name but not in deed: how would you stand with men were you to serve your party so? Who would allow of your companionship

in any human enterprise? Which of you is on the Lord's side?

The men, that take sides in great questions which involve the interests of country and of kind, commit their lives upon the issue and are pledged for constancy to death. Martyrs for liberty and truth have gone, by myriads, to the Scaffold or the Stake: and Marathon, Thermopylæ, and Waterloo are figures, merely to suggest the hundred harvest-fields of death, where human kind has fallen in sheaves, and piled itself in stacks, in the redemption of its pledge, for duty and devotion to the cause, it has espoused. And that amazing Cross, on which the Son of God endured the penalty of human sin, has been an Aaron's rod, to bud and blossom and bear Crosses, upon every hill-side and in every valley, where the Gospel has been preached; that so the noble army of the Martyrs for His name might follow Him in death, as they had followed Him in life. And yet to speak to you, of taking up the Cross; to speak to you of hardness, as good soldiers of Christ Jesus; to speak to you of losses for the Gospel; to speak to you of blood if need be for the Church which Jesus purchased with His blood, is to provoke in you that old Judæan sarcasm, "Ah Lord God, doth he not speak parables?" is, not to touch a fibre in your hearts; or touch it to offend you. How could the Bruces or the Tells, that are the watchwords and the war-cries of oppressed humanity, have lived in such an atmosphere? Who can associate with that greatest human name, which is our blessing and our boast, as

freemen, the thought of such a service? Who of you is on the Lord's side?

“Who is on the Lord's side?” There is no other side but Satan's. A leader, and a master, man must have. It is the devil, if it is not God. If the Lord be God, follow Him, but if Baal, then follow him. It needs no argument to show that this is so. Man was created in his Maker's image, to be His. He left the service and he lost the likeness, through seduction of the Devil. The possibility of his return and restoration could be purchased only by the suffering in the flesh of the Incarnate God. The possibility was purchased for the race upon the Cross. It is made actual in none, but as they embrace it with their hearts and bear it through their lives. “God did not send His Son, to be the minister of sin.” Beloved, I would have you think of this. It is the point on which Salvation turns. And yet you do not half believe it. You do not consider the exceeding sinfulness of sin. You do not consider the awful holiness of God. You do not measure yourselves by the standard of His pure and perfect law. You take counsel of your self-indulgent hearts; and say, where have we sinned so much? You take measure by the wicked world: and say, where am I worse than many others? You listen to the old Satanic lie; and say, we shall not surely die! Beloved, if it be not so, you need no preacher. There should be no Church. There can be no religion. And, there is no God. A preacher just to listen to for half an hour! A Church to come to once a week, to kill an hour or two of un-

appropriated time! A religion that lays no law upon a sinful nature! A God that suffers sin! Beloved, not your youngest child that barely talks would be deceived by such a rhapsody. And you are living in it; and may die in it: and, if you do, will certainly be damned by it! Beloved, the word which declares, "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved;" goes on *at* once to add; "He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because *he* hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." "Be not deceived," says holy Paul, "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." And then those fearful words of Him who died for us: and by whose death alone we live: "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."

"Who is on the Lord's side?" We all mean to be! But, my beloved, when? Have you a bond of fate? Have you a lease of years? Can you be certain to come here this afternoon? May not you step out now, into an open grave? And, if you should not, it may be worse, far worse for you, than if you did. You may live on, for months and years. The angle which

your life is now at from the line of godliness will but lead you farther and still farther off from it. Your hearts grow harder and still harder in security and carelessness. The hope of your return grows fainter and still fainter as you go. And the fierce wrath which you have already heaped up for the day of wrath grows fiercer and still fiercer on your heads. A year, ten years, man's whole threescore and ten, will soon have passed away: and you be left, to reap the whirlwind, you have sown in wind. "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"

"Who is on the Lord's side?" My child, are you? You were made His in baptism. Are you His in heartiness? Do you say with little Samuel, "Speak, Lord; thy servant heareth!" Are you like good Josiah, who at eight years old, did that which was right in the sight of the Lord; and turned not aside, to the right hand or to the left? Are you like Him who was a child that He might be your pattern; who at twelve years old was found in the Temple, in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions: and then went down to Nazareth and did the bidding of his humble, human mother? Who among you, my children, is on the Lord's side?

"Who is on the Lord's side?" Young man, young woman, is it you? Do you remember your Creator now? Now when the springs of life are full, do you seek for them the tree which grows on Calvary to sweeten all their streams? Now when the bloom of

life is on your cheek, and your new life is in its spring, do you lay the first-fruits on His altar that the harvest may be saved? Are you a Timothy that from the child has known the Scriptures? Or a Mary that hath chosen that good part, which cannot be taken from you? Have you knelt before His servant to renew your vows of baptism; and receive the grace from God, to keep and do them? Or is your heart now set upon that service? And are angels tuning now their harps to celebrate your youthful self-devotion as before the Cross you mean to kneel next Sunday and renew its dedication? Who among you, young women and young men, is on the Lord's side?

“Who is on the Lord's side?” Dearly beloved whom God has led thus far along the middle way of life, my brother or my sister, is it you? Not you, whom He has spared so long? Not you, whom He has loved so well? Not you, whom He has blessed so much? Oh my beloved, can it be that you keep back? A man, a woman, with a load of sin upon your head; a load of sorrow on your heart; a bleeding Saviour waiting to receive you at His Cross; a yearning Spirit striving to secure you for Salvation; a soul, a never-dying soul to be forever lost, or be forever blest, as you shall turn by the decision of your own free will, the trembling scale: can it be that you keep back? Shall there be one of you so ransomed, so entreated, so longed for and so yearned over, that will not be on the Lord's side?

My beloved, it seems now as if the Lord's side were not much. The present life shows little difference of

sinner and of saint. They eat, they drink, they buy, they plant, they build. But in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, all this will pass away. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the Cross will be the only sign in heaven or upon earth. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the gaze of every soul of man will rivet its intensity upon Him who died upon it, as He sits in glory upon the throne of Judgment. A moment, and its issues shall be past. A moment; and eternity will be decided. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; and the righteous into life eternal." Who, who, who, is on the Lord's side?

SERMON VI.

CHRIST, THE ONLY REFUGE.

ST. JOHN VI. 68.—Lord, to whom shall we go?

Our Lord had left Jerusalem and crossed the sea of Galilee. A multitude had followed Him, drawn by the miracles which he had wrought. Some seek the Saviour only for their secular advantage. For such, He has no favour. They labour only for the meat which perisheth. He left their company and went into the mountain with the few that followed Him for love. He could not long be left alone. A company was soon there to be fed. And as the merest incident, as one would give a luncheon to a friend that was to take an early train, He fed five thousand upon two fishes and five loaves. The record of it you have just heard in the Gospel. Again He fled into a mountain. They would make a king of Him. His kingdom was not of this world. The little company of His disciples when they missed Him, took ship; and crossed the sea towards Capernaum. It was dark. The wind was high. The flaws upon that sea were swift and violent; like the white squall that fell some years ago upon the Taney, in the harbour at

New York. They were in danger. When were His faithful ones in danger, in the storm or in the fires, that Jesus was not by them? When they had rowed with difficulty, not yet four miles, Jesus came walking to them, on the sea. They did not know Him in the darkness; and they were afraid. We often shrink from God, in the poor blindness of our hearts, when He draws nigh to us in mercy. As Peter, at that wondrous draught by which the Lord repaid their night of profitless exertion, shrank and said, "Depart from me, I am a sinful man, O Lord!" But when He spoke to them those words of love, so tenderly considerate of their infirmity, "It is I, be not afraid!" they willingly received Him into the ship. And though when he came to them, they had not yet made three quarters of the way, across the lake, "immediately the ship was at the land whither they" were going.

"Thou framer of the light and dark,
Steer through the tempest Thine own ark;
Amid the howling wintry sea
We are in port, if we have thee."

And yet the very next day, when the crowd whom He had fed had followed Him, in other boats, across the lake, and He began to talk to them of spiritual things, "the bread of life," "the bread of God," "the bread which cometh down from heaven," and hint to them His own mysterious incarnation; they murmured at Him, and disparaged Him as one whose parents they all knew. And, worse than that, His very followers whom He had come to in the ship, when He pursued His high

discourse of spiritual life and sacramental feeding upon Him—"I am the living bread which cometh down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever: and the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world"—and again, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you:" "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him:" "whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day"—at the first hinting of these great living and life-giving truths of His religion, who had fed their famine in the wilderness, and laid for them the storm-tost Galilee, they murmured at Him and said His teachings were hard sayings; as men now give hard names to the truth, and think they have condemned it. Nay, when He made His Heavenly teachings practical and personal, and brought them home to them, Therefore, said I unto you, that no man can come unto me except it were given unto him of my Father," it is written—shame to read it,—“from that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him.” Like the proud leper, in Elisha's time, they straitened themselves up and said, “Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?” And, then, turned and went away, in a rage. Like some in our day, they more than half suspected that the Saviour, if He taught such things, was hardly evangelical. Like some of you, they said, We like his preaching well enough when he lets us alone. But if He presses home

His doctrines to their practical conclusion, on our lives; if he insists that we shall repent, and be baptized, and come to confirmation, and receive the Supper of the Lord, and live in strict accordance with these high professions; the very moment that he tells us that if we are to be saved it must be in God's way, not our own, and only they can come unto the Father whom the Father draws, from that time He and we are two, we walk no more with Him. This is what some rejoice in by the name of private judgment. It might more accurately be worded, Every man his own religion.

Then follows one of those dramatic scenes, in which the Gospel records are unrivalled. In this, as in the most of them, St. Peter, from his bold and generous nature, is a leading character. I do not know that there is another one, so graphic, so effective, so affecting. "From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."—One is ashamed to add a word to such a passage. "To gild refined gold," seems nothing to it, in wasteful and ridiculous excess. The simple, natural words of Peter, in reply to that affecting plea of Jesus to the twelve, the last that now were left to Him, should be in place of any sermon: as they are the very best of sermons. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

In yielding to the usage, which expects a sermon, though it spoil the text, I shall do the next best thing, to being silent, in saying very little. "Lord, to whom shall we go?"

WE MUST TO SOME ONE :

THEN, TO WHOM ?

We must to some one. Man has a religious nature. "Religious" just means, binding back. It implies a union, lost, which has to be renewed. It is founded on the fact, of the Fall. It enforces the necessity of restoration. In universal man, we find these marks and tallies of a nature, fallen from God, and yearning to return to Him. They vary infinitely. They are faint often, often grotesque, often repulsive. But they are there, and cannot be mistaken. They burn, in sacrificial fires, upon the pictured page of Homer. They are with Romulus and Remus, when they take an omen of the birds, before they lay the mud walls of their robber city. They urge the ponderous car, whose blood-stained wheels through the mild influence of Christian England, will soon be only memories of the idolatry of Hindostan. They lie among the bones of apes and snakes under the gree-gree sheds of Western Africa. They breathe in murmurs through the pines, from that far spirit land, in which our Indian tribes dream that the fathers of their race hunt, without hindrance from the white man. Nay, every heart betrays them, to itself, in what men call superstitions. In dreams, in omens, in presentiments, in lucky and unlucky days, in the first sight of the new

moon, in the star that ruled at our nativity, all confess a power without us. All confess a power above us. All confess the conscious loss of its life-giving favour. All admit the desirableness of its return to us. All imply the necessity of a propitiatory intervention. The question which they ask, is, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" The conclusion in which they concur is, to some one, we must.

We must to some one. *Then to whom?* It is one thing to be conscious of a loss. It is another to know how it is to be repaired. The yearnings of our fallen nature go no further than the first. Or if they do in traces of that better knowledge which the wanderers from God have lost, as God alone can reveal Himself, so He alone can show the way that leads to Him. As the tendency to cross the natural self-love, in self-inflictions of loss or shame or suffering, prostrations in the dust, covering the head with ashes, self-scourging, self-distortions, self-mutilations—which universally prevails,—is the confession of the Fall, so the notion, which is found as widely, of some form of substituted suffering, as presented in the sacrifices which have stained the world with blood, is but the expectation of the Cross. The germ of all of it is in those primal words which God addressed to Satan, when, of the woman's seed, He said, It shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise His heel. The victory was to be achieved through suffering. Satan must be destroyed. In the struggle, the humanity of Jesus must be crucified. Without shedding of blood, there could be no remission. And of that blood

which the Lamb of God alone could shed, to satisfy the suffering for sin, the blood that streamed from every altar, from Abel's to the last that reeks and smokes on the earth, is but the forecast shadow. All these religious traces, that, everywhere, in every age, give utterance to the universal sense of man, "we must to some one," are hints of the Fall not only, but of the Cross. They are reflections of that, which Moses has revealed, "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him." They are confirmations of what Solomon concluded, that "God hath made man upright but they have sought out many inventions." They are the struggles of the magnet towards the pole, which is the source and centre of its influence. They are what St. Augustine owned, so beautifully, "Thou hast made me like Thyself, and my heart rests not, unless in Thee." What nature could but hint has been revealed through grace. That which our race has yearned for, from the Fall, and struggled after, but could never find, is, in the Gospel, brought to light. Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world. That central cross, that suffering Christ, that cleansing and atoning blood. This satisfies the desire of every living thing. "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth." "We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ." "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and

are sure, that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

Beloved, have you come to Him, whom Peter would not leave? Have you found in your hearts "Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth"? And, in the reception of His saving Cross, found rest unto your souls? Have you found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ, and in your daily crucifixion with Him on His Cross, do you, in all your lives, avow yourselves His followers, and make your high profession plain? If it be so, happy are ye! For the Spirit of Glory and of God resteth upon you. Members of Christ, children of God and heirs of the kingdom of heaven, you have but to hold fast to your profession, to secure the crown which Jesus purchased for you on the cross. He, if you will, will guide you here by His grace. He, if you will, will receive you hereafter to His glory? Well may you reply to Him, in Peter's words of confidence and love, should Satan, or the world, or your own sinful flesh, attempt to draw you from your Saviour: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we know and are sure, that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

Beloved, who have not yet come to Him, you are invited, all, to-day. He calls you to repentance, with the solemn declaration, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." He invites you to believe in Him, with the gracious assurance, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." He urges you to Baptism, by those expressive words, "Except a man be

born of the water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." He draws you to receive the laying on of hands, by the assurance, that whosoever, shall repent and believe in Jesus and be baptized in His name, "shall, so, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." He wins you to His holy supper, if His dying love can win you, by words so gracious, that they stream with bleeding pity for your souls: "Take eat, this is My Body;" "Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood, which is shed for you, for the remission of your sins;" "Do this, in remembrance of me." Pass but one weary night, from these entreating tones, the night of lone Gethsemane, and see Him, on His Cross. See how He hangs in shame, between two thieves. See how He writhes in agony, from those rough nails. See, how He shudders, as the spear is thrust, into His side. It is but the hard saying—alas, for Him, how hard!—which He said in Galilee, "the bread that I will give, is My flesh which I will give for the life of the world." And when, from the tortures of that shameful Cross, with the last effort of that palpitating frame, from the faint flutterings, in which, the pulses of that loving heart die out, He turns and says, as, to His own in Galilee, "Will ye also go away?"—beloved, *will* ye go! Beloved, *can* ye go? Young people will *ye* go? Women, men, with little children, will *ye* go? Faltering, in feebleness upon the brink of life, old people, will *ye* go? Go? And to whom? Go? and for what? Beloved will ye go? "Will ye also go away?"

SERMON VII.

CORNELIUS THE CENTURION.

ACTS X. 2.—A devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house ; which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.

AN old critic, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, has well observed, that “ history is philosophy, teaching by example.” This is eminently true of the sacred history ; every part of which, St. Paul declares, “ was written for our learning.” A better illustration I know not where to find, than the second lesson in this morning’s service, the story of Cornelius.

Judea is a tributary province. Its Roman masters, now, the masters of the world, are well instructed in the art of keeping, what their arms have gained. They gild the chain which binds their captives to the throne. And, so, the seat of government is dignified with the imperial name of Cæsarea. They know with what a festering heart, taxation is endured. And, so, the centurion has his quarters by the publican ; and the “ receipt of custom ” is surmounted by the eagle of the legion. They seem to have ranked Judea, with their choicest acquisitions. Of Cæsarea, which was built like

St. Petersburg, to be magnificent, it is said by Dr. Clarke the traveller, that "in ten years after laying the foundation, it became from an obscure fortress, the most celebrated city of all Syria." And here, that chiefest honour might conspire with utmost strength, the very flower of the whole army must be stationed. And, so, the garrison troop of Cæsarea is "the Italian band." It is in the precincts of this vice-imperial court, in the midst of so much splendour and sensuality, in the service of a heathen emperor, a captain of the guards to a licentious governor, that we find the subject of our story. And, yet, the sacred record of him is, that he is "a devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house; which gave much alms to the people and prayed to God always." It is a lesson to us, not to judge of men, in masses, nor to condemn them, for their rank, or, for their occupation. It was the treasurer of an Ethiopian Queen, whom Philip the Deacon found, reading the Scriptures in his chariot, as he went homeward from his worship, at Jerusalem. And there were "saints," "in Cæsar's household," whom Paul thought worthy of an apostolic salutation. And, there is, yet another lesson, besides that of charitable judgment, towards others; an admonition of just judgment of ourselves. How apt we are, to excuse the slackness of our service, by the exigencies of our condition! To plead our circumstances, in extenuation of our faults. To think, that, were we in this, or that position; if it were not for this, or that, hindrance; for this, or that, temptation, we should live more to God, than we now

do. There is an excellent saying on this subject by Tacitus, "It is the fool, that takes the law from circumstances." And, in Cornelius, a Roman soldier, a captain of the guards, in a provincial garrison; and, yet, "a devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house, which gave much alms to the people and prayed to God always," we have the clearest evidence, that men through grace may shape their circumstances; and, that, such as the principle is, so is the man.

The character of the centurion deserves a brief analysis. He was "a devout man." This means a worshipper of the true God; one who was not an idolater; and does not express, as in our language, the character of his worship. The world, the Jews excepted, was all heathen: had deserted, and so, lost the worship and the knowledge of the only God. In the midst of all this pagan gloom, the Jewish Church was as a light shining in a dark place. Though not designed for wide extension, because not meant for permanence, many of different nations came to its light. Some were circumcised; and, so, made Jews complete, and admitted to all Jewish privileges, as "proselytes of righteousness." Some embraced the general obligations of the true religion, without conforming to the Law; and were allowed to worship in the outer court of the Temple, as "proselytes of the gate." Of this sort, doubtless, was Candace's Treasurer. And such Cornelius was.

Nor was he that unmeaning thing, which some men speak of, a speculative believer. "He feared God," and was not afraid to own that he feared God. The

Christian, is, indeed, the only courage, "fear not them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do, but I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: fear Him, who after He hath killed, hath the power to destroy both soul and body, in hell; yea, I say unto you, fear Him." "The fear of God," the wise man truly says, "is the beginning of wisdom." And they who fear Him can fear nothing else. How paltry the pretence of manhood, which cringes to the creature, while it flouts the omnipotent Creator; disregards the will, despises the word, neglects the worship, and profanes the name, of the eternal Judge. And how noble, beyond all praise of man, the bearing of that aged Smyranean Bishop who, in the very eye of the devouring flame, calmly replied to all the menaces and all the blandishments of the Proconsul: "Fourscore and six years have I continued serving Him, and He hath never wronged me; how can I then, blaspheme my King and Saviour?"

Nor, did Cornelius "fear God" alone; but "with his house." Man has a social nature. Religion is a social principle. Its essence is love, and love is essentially unselfish. It leans away from itself, and finds its happiness in making others happy. When Andrew, the first called Apostle, had followed Christ, "he first findeth his own brother Simon." The treasure, which we share with those we love, is doubled by dividing. The heart, in which the love of God is shed abroad, can no more shut it up, within itself, than light can keep itself, from shining. Family religion is the fruit and

proof of individual piety. Who can bear to think of nature's holy bond, severed forever, at the grave? Who that looks forward to the resurrection morning, but with the hope that it will gather the beloved? What type of heaven, so kindred with the heart, as that of home? What atmosphere that can secure the happiness of home, but that of heaven? Abraham, the friend of God, was signalized by God himself, as the pattern of family religion: "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment." Job, of whom God declared, that "there is none like him upon earth," a perfect and an upright man, is set forth as a pattern of family religion, who "sent and sanctified his children, and rose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for, said he, it may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." Joshua, the type and namesake of the Saviour, who led the chosen people into the land of promise, declares himself the champion of family religion, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Their practice strongly contradicts their profession, who, professing to fear God, do not fear Him with their house. How do they regard the precept, "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" how can they claim the promise, "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," who set not up the family altar by their hearth, and crown it with the

morning and the evening sacrifice of their united prayers and praises ?

But the centurion's character still grows upon our hands. He feared God. He feared God with all his house. His charity began at home. But there it did not end. He "gave much alms to the people." The love that limits itself to home, is only selfishness. It was not so with his. It warmed his heart, to fill and open his hands. "To do good and to distribute" he did not forget. He dispersed abroad, he gave to the poor : and look, how true it is, his righteousness remaineth forever. Nor did he merely give. He "gave *much* alms." When men pay taxes, they are right, to be exact. But when they give, their fear should be of the too little, not of the too much. Alms deeds are done to Him who seeth in secret. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth. And there is that withholdeth more than is good, and it tendeth to poverty." "Let every man do according as he is disposed in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity ; for God loveth a cheerful giver."

Finally, the closing, and the crowning, trial, "he prayed to God always." He was tempted to no self-esteem by his charity, to no self-righteousness by his piety. But when he had done all that he could do, still confessed that the good which was in him, was not his ; that the good which he had done was wrought of God ; and prayed to God always for forgiveness and acceptance. So it is, that they, who come the nearest to the law of God, will always think most lightly of themselves, and

set most lightly by their services. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." "I know that in me," the apostle says, "that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." "Not for my righteousness," said Richard Hooker; "but for the forgiveness of my unrighteousness, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

And, now, observe God's testimony to the acceptance of this pious Gentile. At the ninth hour, he prays. It is three in the afternoon. That day he has not tasted food. So little does he want after his alms or prayers. So deeply does he feel the need of strictest self-denial, before God. Upon the privacy, in which he prays, a light comes down, from heaven. A man in shining garments stands before him. It is an angel with a message from the Lord: "Cornelius, thy prayers and thine alms are come up, for a memorial before God." What condescension in the Holiest. That the prayers and alms of sinners should ascend unto *His* presence. That He should remind Himself, as it were, of His promises, and of their necessity by their devotion and their charities! Dear brethren, if an angel from the Lord should come to us, would it be to acknowledge our devotions and our charities? Should we be safe with God, if His remembrance of us depended upon our alms and prayers?

But we have not heard the angel's message. "Cornelius, thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God." "It is enough," one says, "God asks no more. Cornelius is accepted. Salvation is by

works. Man saves himself through merit." But, wait and hear the message first, and then conclude. "Cornelius, thy prayers and thine alms have come up for a memorial before God. And, now, send men to Joppa and call for one Simon whose surname is Peter—he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." In the words which Simon Peter afterwards employs, "who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." He hears, and he obeys. The Apostle meanwhile, is divinely warned of the intended message. He hastens from Joppa to Cæsarea. He finds Cornelius and his friends expecting his arrival; "now, therefore, are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." He preaches to them the Gospel of the Cross. Declaring Jesus of Nazareth, whom wicked men had crucified and slain, to be the Christ of God, he reveals Him, also, as the Judge of quick and dead. And sums all up, by the assurance that, through His name, whosoever believeth, shall receive remission of sins. At Peter's preaching they believe. Upon their hearts, purified by faith, the Holy Ghost descends. God bears them witness by the outward act, as by the inward power. And Cornelius and his company, the first-fruits of the Gentiles unto God, are baptized in the name of the Lord. It follows, my beloved, that though prayers and alms go up, as a memorial before God, they cannot purchase pardon and acceptance. That there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, than that of Jesus Christ. That we are

“saved by grace through faith and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works lest any man should boast.”

The declaration of St. Peter, at his entrance into the house of Cornelius, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him,” has been wrested strangely to support the error that men are saved by works. And yet, the apostle, as you see, went on, at once to preach Christ crucified, to declare faith in Him the sole ground of pardon to the sinner; and upon evidence that they believed in Him, to baptize them in His name. Surely the very opposite conclusion is thus unanswerably established. We read of no one in the Holy Scriptures, who lived more nearly to the light which he possessed. It would seem that God had chosen, as the first-fruits of the Gentiles, towards God, this beautiful example of obedience, charity, and piety; that in him He might illustrate that vital principle of our religion, “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” It is true that Cornelius, fearing God and working righteousness was accepted by Him. But only *through* the faith of the Gospel of Christ, and in the sacrament of His Church. And His example, so far from warranting in any, the rejection of the Cross, or its neglect, as the sole way by which the sinner *can* return to God, is proof enough, if Holy Scripture had supplied no other, of the truth of our eighteenth article: “they are to be held accursed, that presume to say that every

man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature. For the Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved." In the express words of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself: "he that hath the Son of God hath life, and he that hath not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

It were impossible, in any sermon, to bring out all the points of interest suggested by the story of Cornelius. I have contented myself with one: its demonstration of that dangerous self-delusion of our nature, its hope of meritorious acceptation before God: and its entire and perfect reference of us all, to that great doctrine of the Gospel, Salvation through a crucified Redeemer. Commending the subject, brethren, to your private meditation, and invoking on your careful study of its truth and duty, the blessing which will make it fruitful in you, in true righteousness and holiness, I shall present, before I close, a thought or two of those most obviously suggested.

Observe the testimony which God bears to the Apostolic ministry. When, at the heavenly vision, Cornelius says, What is it Lord? the Lord does not reply to him. Nor does the angel of the Lord. The answer is, "Send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon whose surname is Peter, *he* shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." God might have answered him at once, by an immediate revelation of His will. Or He

might have used the ministry of angels to that end. But such was not His plan. He had employed the ministry of men, to make His Gospel known throughout the world, and, therefore, Peter must be sent for. It is a perfect answer to all those who say that outward means are unimportant: that one, as well as another, may minister in holy things: that, so the heart be right, and the life good, there is no need of any ministry at all. Thus saith the Lord, "send men to Joppa!" No matter for the distance. No matter for the inconvenience. No matter for the improbability. "Send men to Joppa and call for one Simon whose surname is Peter." That is the very man. No other one will do. "He shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved."

The great sheet, knit at the four corners and let down to the earth, wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air, is an image of the Church of Christ. It is designed to comprehend all nations. Through it, God's gracious ordinance, Go preach the Gospel to every creature, is to be fulfilled. In it, all men are to be made disciples, by baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. By it, the kingdoms of this world are all to be made the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. Although the vision was to Peter, the lesson is for us.

It plainly teaches us our duty to promote, by every effort, this great design of God. We are not to ask, how far the heathen may be saved, without the Gospel.

We are not to speculate as to the power or will of God, to dispense, in this or that necessity, with His own ordinance, the Church. If every soul in heathendom were a Cornelius, we are taught by God Himself, that Peter must be sought for; and the name made known, in which alone Salvation can be had. How much more, then, when we know, that so far from fearing God and working righteousness, the wandering nations grope in darkness; the slaves of selfishness and sensuality, and dead in trespasses and sin!

The story of Cornelius teaches the necessity of baptism. It was not enough that he was a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms, and prayed to God always. It was not enough that God Himself spoke to him from heaven, and sent an angel from His own immediate presence, to instruct him in His will. It was not enough that he had followed the divine commandment to the letter, and listened, with attentive ear, and with obedient heart, to the preaching of the Gospel at the mouth of an Apostle. Nay it was not enough, that God Himself had borne him witness, that the Holy Ghost had fallen on him and on his company; that they spake with tongues, and magnified God. "Then answered Peter, can any man forbid water that these should be baptized? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

Finally, the story of Cornelius illustrates with surpassing beauty the character which God delights in. "If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the

doctrine, whether it be of God.” Obedience is the way to knowledge. They who would have more grace must be faithful in the use of what they have. To Cornelius diligently seeking Him, under all the disadvantages of his position ; and following honestly the partial light which he enjoyed, God graciously revealed Himself ; sent a holy angel to him ; declared his case, by vision, to an Apostle ; and brought an Apostle to his very door. And it is ever thus. The holy and the humble men of heart are they, whom God delights in. The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.

“ Whoe’er, with humble fear,
To God his duty pays,
Shall find the Lord a faithful guide,
In all his righteous ways.
For God, to all His saints,
His secret will imparts ;
And does His gracious covenant write,
In their obedient hearts.”

SERMON VIII.

THE HEALING OF THE MAN BORN BLIND.

ST. JOHN IX. 7.—He went his way, therefore, and washed; and came, seeing.

THE subject of these words is “a man, which was blind, from his birth.” I do not know another passage, sacred or profane, so intensely dramatic, as that, of which they are a part. Homer has nothing, that compares with it; although his battles fight themselves, upon the page, which stories them. Nor is it dramatic, merely, in the sense of being *narrative in action*. As Lord Bacon aptly calls it, “visible history.” It naturally divides itself, into five several acts; in each of which a different set of characters appear: and it is introduced, by a brief historical prologue; and concludes with an epilogue, to show its practical application. It has a special claim, upon our present notice, as the scripture for the second lesson: and I design, briefly and rapidly, to set its graphic incidents before you, for your instruction and impression. In another sermon, I intend to draw from it the high and solemn truths, which it enforces and illustrates.

The prologue is just sufficient to introduce the ac-

tion of the drama, and excite a lively interest in it. Jesus is going about, upon His walks of mercy. His disciples are around Him. They see a man, born blind. What a claim upon their sympathy and pity! So helpless! So dependent! So forlorn! "Knowledge, at one entrance, quite shut out." No light upon the earth! No beauty in the world! No sweetness in his mother's smile! But these were not their thoughts. They were faultfinders, and harsh judges, and they must know who had sinned, that this should be so. Jesus reproofed them gently. It was for no special sin. It was to manifest the mercy and the might of God. He knew by what a cavilling crew He was surrounded. And as it was the sabbath day, He told them, that His time on earth was short, and He must work. "As long as I am in the world, I am the light-giver of the world."

i. The first act of the drama opens, now. Jesus spits on the ground. He makes clay of the spittle. He spreads the clay upon the blind man's eyes. He bids him go and wash them, in a certain pool. He knew his blindness. He yearned for sight. He had faith in the Physician. He obeyed His words. "He went his way, therefore, and washed; and came, seeing." How wonderful a thing! Do not lose sight of the great act, in the few, simple, words. Sublimity is always simple. He went. He washed. He saw. The expression which the sight threw in upon his countenance would change it, as the sunlight, on an overclouded landscape. Hence, when he came back to his neighbors, their doubtfulness as to his identity. An indirect, but powerful attestation

of the miracle. "Some said, This is he; others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he." They naturally ask him of his cure. He answers in the simplicity of truth, "A man that is called Jesus, made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went, and washed, and I received sight." Those famous words of Cæsar's, "I came, I saw, I conquered," are not more rapid, or more graphic. And then that exquisite little stroke, to show the absence of all possible collusion. "Then said they unto him, Where is He? He said, I know not."

ii. In the second act, the Pharisees are introduced. They mixed themselves up with every thing: and were sure to be the masters of whatever they were mixed with. To them accordingly, the neighbours brought the man. They hated Jesus with a perfect hatred. All for the sake of their holy religion, of course. And they hoped to make some capital of this transaction, to His disparagement. They question him about his cure. He answers, as he had before. Truth never varies in its statements. The case is more than clear. That he had been blind, they must admit. That he now sees, they cannot deny. That the cure was wrought by Jesus Christ, he steadily affirms. Must they admit a miracle; and so confess the Christ? What then becomes of them? Their characters among the people? Their standing in the Church? That will never do. They must put Him down; whatever be the means. And malice is not slow in making what it cannot find. "This man is not of God; because He keepeth not the

sabbath day." It is true that He goes about doing good; that He has given up every thing to His benevolence; that He has no certain dwelling-place; that multitudes are wiser for His instruction; that the whole community is better for His influence; that hundreds are happier for His consolations. But He is such a bad man! He prevails so much against the Pharisees! Why, but the other day, He broke the sabbath, to heal a man, who had been, eight and thirty years bedridden. And now, He cures a man born blind, upon the sabbath day. He must, indeed, be a great sinner! Some shrewdly asked, "How can a man, that is a sinner, do such miracles?" *They* did not answer that. Perhaps they did not hear it! It is convenient often, to be deaf. They turn to the blind man to ask his opinion. They get no sympathy from him. He said, at once, "He is a prophet." If so, of course, "of God."

iii. At their wits' end, the Pharisees, in the third act, call in the parents of the blind man. They will make out perhaps through them a case of fraud. The man *does* see. That cannot be denied. But then, he always saw. This is *not* he, that sat, and begged. They will prove that, by his own parents. "Is this your son?" It is. "Who ye say was born blind?" He was. "How then doth he now see?" Ask *him*! So little did this catechising help them. By their own witnesses, they have established against themselves, that he was born blind. Of course a miracle was wrought. They are thus caught in their own trap. Unhappily, they caught the parents too. Finding that Jesus was an overmatch

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for them, among the people, the Pharisees had brought force, in aid of falsehood. They had agreed to excommunicate whoever owned that Jesus was the Christ. They knew that He had cured their son. They knew that, to open the eyes of the blind was a prophetic sign of Christ. But they feared the Jews. And, so they lied. "By what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not, he is of age; ask *him*." So much, for truth! So much, for honesty! So much, for gratitude! "They feared the Jews." As it is written in another place: "among the chief rulers, many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees, they did not confess Him lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men, more than the praise of God."

iv. With the fourth act, the plot grows thicker. They call again the man that had been blind. They will tempt him to lie; as they already had his parents. Half flattering him, half threatening him, they say: Come now; "give God the praise;" let this man go: "we know," he "is a sinner." His answer blends inimitably, humility with fearlessness; just kindling into indignation: "Whether He be a sinner, or no," is not for me to say; "but one thing I do know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." In the malicious hope that he may contradict himself, they question him, again, as to his cure. He sees their meanness and malignity. He is impatient of their insolence. Though single-handed; and *they* many, and in power, he will endure no more. He turns upon them; as a worm will, that men tread

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on. "I have told you already and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? Will ye also be His disciples?" Then, for the ready refuge of the rascal and the ruffian. "They reviled him." They reviled the Christ of God. "Thou art His disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence He is." In their blind rage, they had exposed themselves completely. And, in the quietest way, he takes the full advantage of it. "Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye, who know so much, know not from whence He is; and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but, if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth. Since the world began, was it not heard, that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing." Truth is triumphant, now. And malice can but one thing more: add violence to its reviling: "Thou wast altogether born in sins; and dost thou teach us? and they excommunicated him." But when Galileo was put in prison, the earth did not cease to revolve. Neither, when Cranmer was burned, did the reformation of the Church go back.

"Truth, crushed to earth, revives again;
The eternal years of God are hers:
While error, wounded, shrieks with pain,
And dies, amid her worshippers."

v. The tenderness and gentleness of the closing scene are in beautiful contrast, with the violence and rage which

just preceded it. Jesus heard that they had excommunicated him. He felt for him, in his forlornness; and went to seek him. He is ever seeking out the solitary and the sorrowful. And when He had found him, He said, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" What follows is inimitable. His childlike simplicity. "Who is He, Lord; that I might believe on Him?" And Jesus said unto him, "Thou hast not only seen Him, but it is He that talketh with thee." And then his unhesitating and unswerving faith; so beautifully in keeping with all we have seen of him before: "Lord, I believe! and he worshipped Him." How well might one exchange the world for the meek blessedness of such a faith! And in that prompt prostration of the heart, what fitness for the worship of the angels; and what foretaste of its joys!

"There, thousands worship at Thy feet,
And, there, divine employ,
The triumphs of Thy love repeat
In songs of endless joy."

"Thy presence beams eternal day
O'er all the blissful place.
Who would not drop this load of clay,
And die, to see Thy face."

In the few words which yet remain, a sort of epilogue to this instructive and impressive drama, the Saviour makes a short and searching application of the whole transaction to the Pharisees, who had made themselves so prominent in it. Nor to them only. But to all, in every age, who cultivate their spirit. The spirit

of the Pharisees was self-righteousness. Its fruit was spiritual pride. It is of this that Jesus speaks, when He says, they that think they see shall find themselves blind. The humble and self-depreciating, who feel and own their blindness, *He* will make to see. Stung by the truth of what He said, yet proud and stubborn, to the last, they turned upon Him, in a tone which dared Him to declare the truth: "Are *we* blind also?" Do you mean to say that *we* know not the truth? "Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin." For ignorance and infirmity, repenting of its sinfulness, the blood of Calvary will make atonement. "But now, ye say, We see;" ye deny your sinfulness and wretchedness, and undertake your own salvation: "therefore, your sin remaineth. Ye shall die in your sins."

My beloved, there are but two, that are unchangeable, God and the truth. Of both, Paul's words hold good: "the same, yesterday, and to-day, and forever." An evil nature takes its miserable revenge, of the unchangeableness of truth, by perpetuity of error. There were Pharisees, before Christ came. There have been ever since. You, who find any merit, in yourselves, or demerit, only in your brother; you, who thank God, that you are "not like other men;" you, who content yourselves with having "the form of godliness," without the "power;" you, who are wiser than your teachers; you, who are better than your neighbours; the self-satisfied; the self-willed; the self-righteous; the supercilious; the censorious: whatever you may think, whatever you may call, yourselves, you are but Pharisees.

“Ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.” “Remaineth”—oh to think of it!—through an eternity of wild remorse! But, be the blind man, in our story! Come, in simplicity, to Jesus Christ, for sight. Go, where He sends you. Wash, where He bids you. Do, as He directs you. You will receive your sight. Your heart will soften into flesh. You will become the little children of the Lord. He will take you in His arms, in holy Baptism. He will put His hands on you, in Confirmation. He will bless you in the holy Eucharist, with His “grace and heavenly benediction.” The faith, which saves, shall work in you, by love. It will conform you to His image. It will keep you, for His coming. You shall lie down, in the shadow of the Cross. You shall rise up, in the glory of His crown. Your “eyes shall see the King, in His beauty.” And you “shall be like Him,” for “you shall see Him as He is.” Grant it to us, God of our Salvation, for Thy mercy’s sake, in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

SERMON IX.

REDEMPTION, A SACRAMENTAL AND A JUDICIAL MIRACLE.

ST. JOHN IX. 7.—He went his way, therefore, and washed ; and came, seeing.

I PREACHED, last Sunday, from these words. They are the wonderful epitome of that most dramatic story, the restoration of the man born blind. In a brief and rapid exposition, I set before you, then, its natural, and, yet, striking incidents, just as they live and move, upon the sacred page. I propose, to-day, as I, then, promised, to draw, from it, the high and solemn truths, which it enforces and illustrates.

IT IS THE RECORD OF A MIRACLE ;

IT WAS A SACRAMENTAL MIRACLE ;

IT WAS A JUDICIAL MIRACLE.

I. *It is the record of a miracle.* The man was born blind. This was established, on the best possible testimony, that of his parents. That, “since the world began, it was not heard that any man opened the eyes of one, that was born blind,” the man himself boldly asserted ; and no one contradicted him. That Jesus

Christ did open his eyes, he solemnly declared; and even the Pharisees had to admit it. Their charge of sabbath-breaking rested upon that admission. We have, here, fulfilled the definition of a miracle, by Dr. Johnson; "an act, beyond human or natural power, performed, in attestation of some truth." It takes nothing from the miracle, recorded by St. John, that Dr. Cheselden, seventeen centuries later, and others, since, gave sight to the blind. It does not appear that they were born so. They had some vision. Their relief was achieved by surgical process, removing the cataract. The means, which Jesus used, were clay and water: powerless, both, but as He made them the media of His omnipotence. In all the cases, where relief was surgical, time and practice were required for accurate vision. The objects seem to touch the eye. There is no discrimination between forms; as between a circle, a square, and a triangle; but all seem to be round. Our blind man saw at once. "He went his way, therefore, and washed; and came, seeing." This is a miracle complete. And Nicodemus justly states the inevitable conclusion: "no man can do these miracles, that thou doest, except God be with him." It was the demonstration of His power and Godhead.

II. *It was a sacramental miracle.* He might have said, as once before, "Let there be light!" It would have been, as it was then. Omnipotence is infallible. No more than that was needed, for the creation. No less than that was equal to this cure. The difference

was, only, in the mode. Then, "He spake; and it was done." Now, He made use of intermediate instrumentalities. "He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see." In the one case, the miracle was direct. In the other case, it was sacramental. He need not have spit upon the ground. He need not have made clay of the spittle. He need not have anointed the eyes of the blind man, with the clay. When two blind men implored His help, He merely touched their eyes, and they received sight. When blind Bartimeus said, 'Lord, that I might receive my sight,' He simply spoke His cure: "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole." "And immediately he received his sight." Not even a touch was needful. But now there must be spittle. There must be clay, made with it. The clay must be spread upon the blind man's eyes. It is His way, who doeth all things well. Who shall question the instrumentalities, which He still employs? Who shall doubt, because he does not see, their wisdom? That the ground must be ploughed, must be manured, must be watered? That there must be faith and penitence and prayer, and a material sanctuary, and priestly ministrations? Nor did the anointing yet suffice. "He said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash." If he had refused to go, or if he had gone to any other pool, or if he had gone to Siloam and not washed, who can believe that he would have received his sight? Who shall hesitate, as to his directions now? "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." "Drink ye all of this:

for this is my blood, of the New Testament ; which is shed for many, for the remission of sins."

III. And, finally, *it was a judicial miracle*. Its uses were not ended with the blind man's cure. It reached beyond it, far, as a foreshadowing of the judgment: to warn the Pharisees, themselves, of their own danger ; and to warn all, *in* them. "For judgment, I am come into this world, that they which see not might see ; and that they which see might be made blind." Another presentation of the moral of the parable, called "the Pharisee and the Publican." "God I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are ; nor even as this Publican." And, again, "God be merciful to me a sinner." And, then, the contrast, and the application. "I tell you, this man went down to his house, justified, rather than the other : for, every one that exalteth himself shall be abased ; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." So perfectly reflected in the moral of this story : "and some of the Pharisees, who were with Him, heard these words, and said unto Him, Are we blind also ? and Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind ye should have no sin, but now, ye say, We see ; therefore your sin remaineth."

And now, to apply this most instructive and impressive story, to our own case. The miracles of Jesus had in them all, what Lord Bacon applies to the prophecies, "springing, or germinant, accomplishment." They were not fulfilled entirely, at the first ; but, reached beyond, and had another and a fuller application : just as words

spoken originally, of David, had their fulfilment, only, in His son, and Lord; and as our Lord's predictions, as to the destruction of Jerusalem, will have their full reality, in the terrors of the awful judgment. Thus regarded, the passage, now before us, does, indeed, enforce and illustrate the highest and most solemn truths:

THAT OUR REDEMPTION IS A MIRACLE:

THAT IT IS A SACRAMENTAL MIRACLE;

THAT IT IS A JUDICIAL MIRACLE.

i. *Redemption is a miracle.* To restore sight to one, born blind, was an unquestionable miracle. God only could perform it. "If this man were not of God, he could do nothing." But, now, the soul is blind. Blind by nature, utterly blind. Blind, to duty. Blind, to happiness. Blind, to itself. Blind, to God. It must grope, darkly on, through life. It must go groping on, through the thick darkness of eternity.

"O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon:

Irrecoverably dark; total eclipse,

Without all hope of day."

What, but creative power, can meet this dire emergency? Who else, enable the blind soul to see its way to happiness and heaven, but He who said, Let the light be: and it was? A miracle of love, that our Redemption should be possible. And, then, a miracle of power, to make it actual. The sin was wilful, was deliberate; was against duty, against love, against most solemn warning. It believed the Devil, before God: and so, made Him a liar. Whence can redemption come, from

such a fall? From the great love of God. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love, wherewith He loved us even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that, whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." When Abraham took his only son, his Isaac, to the mountain, and set up the altar, and bound his child, and took the knife, to slay him, at God's bidding, the love, which yielded such a sacrifice, procured for him the name of "Friend of God." How great the miracle of love, when God gives up to death, His only-begotten; and Calvary is stained with the heart's blood of Him, Who made the worlds!

And what a miracle of power! To conquer Satan. To break down His kingdom. To overcome death. To rescue a whole race, from ruin. To create anew the creature, that had destroyed the first creation. To open heaven to all believers. How magnificent the thought, that that rude cross should bear the infinite burden of the sins of all mankind. How sublime the revelation, that a drop of that heart's blood should wash the whole world of sinners. No wonder that the rocks were rent. No wonder that the earth was shaken. No wonder that the sun was dark. No wonder that the dead came forth. Omnipotence was helpless, through our sorrows. The Godhead was incarnate; and suffered for our sins.

ii. *Redemption is a sacramental miracle.* It is made

available, to faith, through outward means, and agencies. We are of a twofold nature. We sin, in both. We are redeemed, in both. We must be sanctified, in both; that we may be saved in both. Hence the primeval institution of sacrifices. Hence the Mosaic ceremonial. Hence the Incarnation. Hence, the Crucifixion. Hence, the Font, with the regenerating wave. "Except a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And hence the altar, with the food, that feeds the soul: "take, eat, this is my body;" "drink ye all of this." "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." It is written, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." But, it is, also, written, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." It is written, "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." But, it is also, written, "The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" And, again, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him." Happy, they, who take God, at His own word, and go to Him, on His own terms. Who, at His command, arise, like Saul, and are baptized, and wash away their sins. Unto whom, like the two at Emmaus, He is made known "in the breaking of bread."

iii. And finally, *Redemption is a judicial miracle.* In Adam, the race was created, upright. In Adam, the race fell. In Adam, the race was all redeemed.

But, not all, therefore saved. The cross, which comprehends, must still divide, the race. As Jesus came into the world, so, *that* is set, “for judgment.” They, which saw not, were made to see, by Him. And they, who thought they saw, became more blind. There is no middle way. The wave of human life is parted, at the Cross. As it sets, to the right hand, or sets to the left, it bears the souls of men, to endless bliss, or endless woe. Now, is the time to make the choice, which will run on through all eternity. The meek, the lowly, the loving, children, and the childlike, believe in Jesus, and are saved. The proud, the self-righteous, the unloving, trust in themselves, and perish. If they were blind, they should have no sin. The blood of Jesus would have cleansed them, from it all. They say, they see; they trust in themselves, that they are righteous: therefore their sin remaineth.

My beloved, you have listened, many times, to these same things. You must, still, listen, to them. In religion, there is nothing new. If there were, it must be false. Is God new? Is the truth new? Is the Cross new? Can there be a new law? Can there be a new worship? Can there be a new Church? No, my beloved! There is but “One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” One Saviour of all sinners. One way, by which all sinners must be saved. The answer of the Pentecost is, still, the answer, to whoever asks the way, which leadeth unto life, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost: for

the promise is to you and your children, and to all that are afar off; even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Great as the miracle of our Redemption is, a miracle of love unlimited, and of almighty power, it is, still, a sacramental miracle; and must be sought in the way, which He Himself appoints, who wrought it: and it is still a judicial miracle, and must increase the condemnation of all, in whom, it does not work salvation. Unless the blind man had obeyed the Lord, and gone, and washed in Siloam, he would have died in the blindness, in which he was born. And to the Pharisees, who rejected Jesus, and mocked the miracle, it only brought a harder heart, and a more fierce damnation. "If ye were blind ye should have no sin: but, now, ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." For the preaching of the Cross is, to them that perish, foolishness, but unto us, which are saved, it is the power of God." "To the one, we are the savour of death unto death; and, to the other, the savour of life unto life." Think, my beloved, that all the agony, and all the anguish of the Cross must be in vain, for some! Think, if it should, for you! O Saviour of the world, who by Thy Cross and precious blood hast redeemed us, save us, we beseech thee, from ourselves!

SERMON X.

THE POWER OF FAITH, THE VIRTUE OF FAST- ING AND PRAYER.

ST. MARK IX. 29.—And He saith unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing,
but by prayer and fasting.

THESE words conclude the second lesson of this morning's service. It would seem from them that, that may be achieved by prayer and fasting, to which no other means are adequate. It would also seem, from the recital of the same transaction by St. Matthew, that their virtue lies in the power of faith. Jesus had been upon the Mountain of the Transfiguration. While he was absent with the favoured three, Peter and James and John, an anxious father had brought to the other Apostles, his suffering son, which had a dumb spirit, that they might cast him out. They could not do it. The disappointed father made his application to the Saviour; "If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us." To Him, the cry of sorrow never rose in vain. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And, when the father's heart, so touched, poured out the living waters of a true, but trembling trust, "Lord, I believe ;

help Thou my unbelief," He cast the devil out, and healed the child. "Then came the disciples to Jesus apart; and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for, verily, I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit, this kind goeth not out, but by prayer and fasting." I repeat it, these words appear to teach, that, that may be achieved, by prayers and fasting, to which no other means are adequate. It also seems, from the comparison of Scripture, that their virtue lies in the power of faith.

I know it will be said, these words are spoken of a class of evils, which have ceased to plague our race. What Jesus said about the casting out of devils; and it might almost seem, but of one kind of these, can have but little application to our time. But, it is the principle, with which we are concerned. "Why could not we cast him out?" the Apostles say. "Because of your unbelief." And then, as if to suggest the reason of their want of faith, "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting." In other words, if the Apostles had had faith, they might have healed the child. They had not faith, because they did not fast and pray. So far as these words of our Lord involve a principle, they are of permanent and universal application. I shall inquire first, as to the principle; then, as to its application to our case.

If you compare the narratives of St. Matthew and St. Mark, you will find, that while the latter goes at length into the features of the case, unrivalled in its tenderness and truth to nature, the former, omitting these, is fuller in his statement of the Saviour's answer to the mortified Apostles. Were the story left, as St. Mark records it, the connection of the text, with what precedes it, would seem abrupt and violent. "Why could not we cast him out?" "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting." St. Matthew gives us the connecting link. "Why could not we cast him out? Because of your unbelief: for, verily, I say unto you, If ye have faith, as a grain of mustard seed, nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit, this kind goeth not out, but by prayer and fasting." The principle involved here, is the power of faith: faith, as the gift of God; faith, in its influence on man.

The words of our divine Redeemer, "If ye have faith, nothing shall be impossible unto you," as addressed to the Apostles; and again, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth," as addressed to the father of the suffering child, lay down the grounds of our religion. The two cases are, in this, unlike; that, in the latter, faith is made the ground of power to the individual directly; while, in the former, it is made the ground of power, mediately, for the relief and benefit of others. In both cases, the principle is the same. All things are possible to faith, because, with God, all things are possible. The power

of faith is the power of God. It is, of course, omnipotence.

When our Lord speaks here, as in other places, of "faith as a grain of mustard seed," He means to teach that faith is not a thing of less or more. It is, or it is not. If it is, though it be but "as a grain of mustard seed," yet, if it really is, and lays its hold on God, it has its way with Him, as He sees most for its advantage; and is, in that, omnipotent. Now, of the grain of mustard seed, the same divine Instructor tells us in another place, it is "the least of all seeds." Faith, as a grain of mustard seed, is, thus, the emblem of a real faith; not to be measured by its size, but by its vital energy. The least of all the seeds, when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs. So faith, if it be only faith, removes a tree, or mountain at its will; does more than that, tears up the rooted evil from the heart, or casts from it the mountain load of guilt: in simplest phrase, finds all things possible, because it works by Him who is Almighty. This is the secret of the wonders which the Scriptures, every where, ascribe to faith. It is not the believing man that does them, in himself, or for another. It is not faith, that does them, through any energy or virtue, of its own. It is, as the Apostle says, I can do all things, through Christ which strengtheneth me: where the original is stronger far, than our translation. It reads, through Christ, *in-strengthening* me; an expression, which he amplifies with an unwonted fulness, even for him, in writing to the Ephesians: "for this cause, I bow my knees unto the Father

of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," being called *Christians*, after Him—"that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might, by His Spirit, in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." In these last words, the secret lies. Christ dwells in the heart by faith. The result is, what the Apostle asks for, in the same connection, "that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Is it much to say, of such a faith, that it can remove mountains; when it is the pledge of *His* indwelling, by whom the mountains first were made? Is it much, to say, to such, "Nothing shall be impossible to you," when of a truth, *He* dwells in *them* and *they* in *Him*, with Whom "all things are possible?" Enough to know, that souls, once dead in trespasses and sins, by faith may live; a resurrection mightier far than that, which, from the teeming earth, shall start, when the Archangel's trumpet sounds. Enough to know, that sinful souls may win from God, through faith, for souls as sinful as their own, the grace that shall create them new, in holiness and righteousness; as real a creation, and as glorious, as that record tells of, with which Moses opened, first, the book of life, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth!"

Faith does no violence to the heart. It does not come to it, unasked. It does not dwell in it, unwelcomed. All men have not faith. Why not? Not because God refuses it to any. He will have all men to be saved. And yet, without faith, it is impossible

to please Him. Faith is the gift of God. It is His free gift, through Jesus Christ His Son. It is the indwelling of His Son through the Holy Spirit. But so is light the gift of God; His free gift; we may say, His free indwelling gift. Yet men may close their eyes; and so, not see. They may abuse their eyes; and so, see dimly or see double. In a beautiful figure, Christ describes Himself as one who stands at the door and knocks. "If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to Him and will sup with him, and he with me." He desires an entrance into every heart. His entrance is by faith. But the door must first be opened. He comes not in by any violence. He stands at the door and knocks. In many ways He knocks at every heart. Knocks, in infancy, by all the tender pulses of a mother's love; quickening the soul to faith. Knocks, in childhood, by the first taste of pleasures, ever new and full and unfatiguing. Knocks, in youth, by the expansion of the bosom, with high thoughts, and noble impulses, and generous affections. Knocks, in manhood, by the vicissitudes of life, its joys and sorrows, its failures and successes, its trials and its triumphs. Knocks, in age, by the quick falling, of the few and wasting sands, that hurry through the glass; that they may be our sprinkling, for the grave. Knocks, in the Holy Scriptures; knocks, in the services and seasons of the Church; knocks, in the loss of children; knocks, in the death of friends; knocks, in the fireside incidents that chequer home; knocks, in the throes of nations that convulse the world; knocks, in

the thunder clang, that rends the heavens ; knocks, in the still small voice, which only silent hearts, that hearken for it, hear. Whatever be the time, whatever be the way, knocks, that He may enter in, and dwell by faith ; and to him that hears and opens, He comes in, and makes His home with him, and is his life, and strength and joy : “ I will sup with him, and he with me.” But, now, suppose a heart that will not hear. But, now, suppose a heart that will not open. But, now, suppose a heart that will not have the Christ to sup with it. Is there a thing more hateful among men, or harder to endure, than to come in, as an unbidden guest ? Or, if there be, must it not be to stay unwelcomed, where the host is distant, and the guests are rude ? Is there a man that would endure it ? And can we think it, of the Son of God ? My brethren, these things are an allegory. If Christ desires an entrance into human hearts, it is to make them happy. He is at home in heaven. He fills it with His presence ; and His presence is its bliss. When He comes down, to knock at human hearts, it is to win new shares of that bliss : to give them tastes, in His indwelling love, of that which makes the joy of heaven ; that they may rise with Him, and so be with Him, where He is. But He must deal with hearts as hearts. And hearts are only hearts, as they desire and love. A heart will ask for what it desires. A heart will cling to what it loves. Prayer is the asking of the heart for Christ. Prayer is the opening of the door for Christ. Prayer is the welcoming of Christ, to be the inmate and the guest.

It never may have framed itself in words. It never may have framed itself in thoughts. It is the feeling of a want. It is the owning of a feeling of a want. And it is heard in heaven as soon as it is owned; and answered sooner, than it is heard. It matters nothing, what the faith is for; to cast the devil from the soul of him who asks it; or to cast it from a neighbour's agonizing child. To the question, "Why could not we cast him out?" the answer will still be, "Because of your unbelief." And it will still, forevermore, be true, "This kind goeth not out but by prayer."

And this is not yet all. Hearts are for love, as well as for desire. As they will ask for what they desire, so they will cling to what they love. When men have won the presence of a loved and honoured guest, with what assiduity, will they strive to make him welcome? To keep what we love is an instinct of nature, as prompt as to ask for what we desire. And the secret, universally is this; to assure him of our choice, by our compliance with his will: to be like him, because we love him. And so with Jesus Christ. His knocking at our hearts is, that He may enter in and dwell with us by faith. In His own engaging words, "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Nothing could more happily express the mutual complacency of the loving and the loved. Nothing could express more forcibly that perfect and entire conformity, which is the only ground of mutual complacency. But how can this be, where the heart is

not given up to Him? How can this be, where the world insists upon the larger share; and has its claim allowed? How can this be, where the flesh is pampered, and its will obeyed? How can this be, where self seeks its own, serves itself, pleases itself, indulges itself, enthrones itself? Would any one conduct so, to a loved and honoured guest? Would such an one abide with him, who did? Will Jesus Christ? Can darkness dwell with light? Or sight with faith? Or the Cross of Jesus, with the world that nailed Him to it? It was not so that the Apostle had learned Christ. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." And, again, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet, not I, but Christ, that liveth in me; and the life which I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." The lesson of all this is plain. Christ dwells in the heart by faith. True faith is Christ indwelling in the heart. The power of faith is Christ in-strengthening. Much as He longs to dwell in every heart, to be its life and strength and joy, He only enters in, at its desire. He only dwells there with its undivided and exclusive love: the love that does all for the loved; that denies the world, that denies the flesh, that denies itself, for Him; bearing His Cross, and nailed, with Him, to it. It matters not what the faith, which is, in fact, Christ in us, is for; to cast the devil from the soul of him who asks it, or from a neighbour's agonizing child. To the question "Why could

not we cast him out?" the answer still must be, "Because of your unbelief." And it will still, for evermore, be true, "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting."

If I have developed justly the principle which is involved in these emphatic words, their application to our case will be an easy matter. If they do involve a principle, it must apply to all, in all relations, always. It is to faith, that all the promises are made. Nothing, in life or death, for earth or heaven, that is not pledged to faith. Are these things realized in us? And if not, why not? Are we victorious over sin? Are we unshackled by the world? Are we sustained in trials? Are we consoled in troubles? Has life been lightened of the load which sinks the heart? Is death divested of its sting? And if not, why not? "Why could not we cast him out?" Dear brethren, it is "because of unbelief." If we had faith as a grain of mustard seed, nothing should be intolerable, nothing should be impossible, for us. And if you turn and ask, Where is our faith? How has it lost its power? "Why could not we cast him out?" I answer in the words of Jesus Christ: "this kind"—whatever it be which proves too much for you and overcomes you—"this kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting."

I know how poor an answer this will seem to many of you. And so, to "preach Christ crucified" was "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness." And yet to them that were called, and yielded to the call, it proved in every case, "Christ,

the power of God and the wisdom of God." My brethren, they, that take God at His word, have this inestimable advantage, that they throw the whole responsibility on Him. And He will meet them so. "Commit thy way unto the Lord"—in the original, it is *roll thy way upon the Lord*—"and He shall bring it to pass." But we must take His word as to the way, and trust Him as to the end. We must obey His call. We must employ His means. We must wait His time. We must rejoice in His result. We have but to wait on Him, and tarry His leisure, and *He will give us*—better even than that, He will make what He gives us—"our heart's desire." Be persuaded then, dear brethren, to take Him at His word; to hear, and obey His call. Hear and obey Him, as He calls you in His holy word, and now especially by His holy Church, to turn to Him, in "weeping, fasting and praying." Surely, there is need enough that we should weep. Our several sins, our several sorrows, our selfishness, our worldliness, our disregard of Him, our disesteem of Heaven; our national sins, man-worship, greediness of gain, contempt for moral obligations, dishonesty, licentiousness, irreverence in every form; our offences as a Church, having a form of godliness without the power, harsh judgment of one another, neglect of prayer, neglect of fasting, neglect of almsgiving, neglect of Sacraments: surely these make up a load too heavy, far, for us to bear, and which appeals to us, with agonizing earnestness, to roll it all upon the Lord. When David's child was struck, he fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon

the earth. It was the silent agony of nature. He forgot to eat his bread. And so shall we, if we weep truly for our sins. We shall deny our appetites. We shall mortify our evil natures. We shall crucify the flesh. How does the sackcloth of the penitent suit with the cheerful feast? How do the ashes on the head agree with tabret and with harp? Brethren, let us be one thing or the other. Let us deny that we are sinners. Or let us humble ourselves with true repentance; that God, through Jesus Christ, may grant us His forgiveness. When the people of Nineveh believed God, they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least; "saying, let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing, let them not feed nor drink water: but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God; yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not." It was a solemn and affecting act. It was a fast that mortified the heart. "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that He said that He would do unto them; and He did it not." Only let all our self-denial be with more than corresponding deeds of kindness to the poor. "Is not this the fast," God says, "that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burthens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry,

and that thou bring the poor, that are cast out, to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee: the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward." And above all, and before all, let us try the might that is in prayer. "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing; ye shall receive." "Verily, I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven." Let us cast ourselves, beloved, upon these plain, these precious promises. They are the very word of God. There are depths in them, which no soul of man has ever fathomed. There are heights in them, to which no angel's wing has ever soared. And, yet, they are all ours, in all their gracious depths, and all their glorious heights, through Him, who taught us how to pray.

SERMON XI.

SALVATION, THROUGH SACRAMENTAL UNION WITH
THE MEDIATOR, AND THROUGH SANCTIFYING GRACE.

ACTS XVI. 30.—What must I do to be saved?

THE Holy Scriptures have this, peculiar to them, that the most important truths are frequently brought in, in a connection the most incidental. Some common thing occurs. The very commonest, it may be. Two fishermen mending their nets; or a woman drawing water at a well. And they shall lead to the development of the sublimest spiritual truths: or indicate an office, and a line of office, which shall revolutionize the world; and bring it back to God. You never could divine, from the opening of the narrative, to what conclusion it shall lead. It may conduct to nothing, which transcends the line of common life. Or, it may solve a question, at which Socrates and Plato, and all that ever have been dreamed of, as philosophers, stood mute, while living; and, in dying, “made no sign.” This difference was noticed well by St. Augustine. “In Cicero and Plato, and other such writers, I meet with

many things acutely said, and things that excite a certain warmth of emotion; but in none of them do I find these words; ‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’” In none of them, he might have said, do I perceive the shadow of an answer to the question, which the text propounds, “What must I do to be saved?”

And how remarkable is the connection in which the question and the answer both come in! The Apostle was at Philippi, with his companion Silas. A poor girl, whose dreadful trial, in the possession of an evil spirit, was made by mercenary masters the means of gain, had recognized in them, by that strange mixture, which such cases often manifested, “the servants of the most high God,” and publicly proclaimed them such. The Apostle, grieved at the suspicion of collusion with the devil, who had gained the mastery of her, expelled him from her in the name of Jesus Christ; and so destroyed their trade. It was the old warfare, Mammon against God, and the exasperated tricksters dragged them into court: and stirring up the mobs to overawe the magistrates, had them first beaten, and then imprisoned. “And the multitude rose up together against them, and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely: who having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.” Malignant persecutors; corrupt magistrates; an infuriate mob:

stripped of their clothes ; smarting from the scourge ; thrust into a dungeon ; fastened in the stocks. Behold the shadow cast before it, by the martyr's crown ! And in the next line, listen to the echoes which anticipate angelic songs. And at midnight, Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God. Fearless and fervent, they lifted up their voices, so that all the prisoners heard them. And they were heard in heaven. An earthquake ; the foundations of the prison shaken, the doors all opened, the bands all loosed : behold the tokens of a present God ! The jailer was aroused. He saw the prison open. His fear supplied the worst conclusion. The prisoners were gone. His life would be the forfeit. In his desperation, he himself would take it. But God had better things in store for him. His prisoner is his preserver. "Do thyself no harm ; for we are all here." The unlooked-for mercy moves and melts his heart. He calls for a light. He springs into the dungeon. He comes trembling to the Apostles. He falls down before them. He brings them from their dungeon. He pours his heart all out, in the affecting cry, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved ?" He had heard of the mission on which they had come. He had heard of the Gospel which they preached. Lydia and her house had been converted by them. They had cast out the devil from the damsel. They had borne patiently the stripes, the dungeon, and the stocks. Their midnight hymn had caught his watchful ear. When the prison doors were open, they remained. When the hands and feet were loosed, they used no violence. When he

would have killed himself, they interfered. His heathenism was staggered by the miracles. His sense of sinfulness was roused by the terrors of the scene, and the self-destruction he had so narrowly escaped. His confidence in them was fixed, by their meekness in suffering, and by their magnanimity in triumph. He too would know the God, in whom they trusted. He too would find the peace, in which they rejoiced. He too would share the grace, in which they triumphed. He too would be partaker of the Salvation, which they had found themselves, and now proclaimed to others. "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They were almost the very words, in which the first believers cast themselves on Peter and the rest, when they had heard the Gospel on the day of Pentecost, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They were, in substance, just what Paul himself had said, when to the voice which spake to him from heaven, he yielded up his heart and life, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" They are the natural outcry of the heart, at the first moment that it feels its sinfulness, and so its danger, and cries mightily to God, in personal conviction and in personal confession, "What must I do to be saved?"

And as the question, so the answer is but one. When the first converts of the Gospel came to Peter and the rest with the beseeching cry, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The answer was, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." When Saul, as he approached Damascus, was arrested by the light from heaven, and heard the words

of Jesus, and believed in Him, and said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—his faith and his obedience, though so free and full, had not achieved their perfect work, until at God's direction, he arose, and was baptized. And now, when special signs from God Himself had wrought the jailer at Philippi, up to the great question of humanity, "What shall I do to be saved?"—the record does not end until it adds, "and he was baptized, he, and all his, straightway."

There is a threefold lesson therefore in the text, and its connections. A lesson which is universal, in its application, to all persons, times, and places. But which applies especially to us here, now, when, in the stated ministrations of this parish, the season has again returned, which specially invites you to the contemplation of the Cross, and Him who died on it; that in the acceptance of His Gospel, through the power and presence of His Spirit, you may attain to the Salvation which He purchased, and be fitted for the heaven which He hath opened for all believers.

SALVATION IS MEDIATORIAL.

SALVATION IS THROUGH SACRAMENTAL UNION WITH THE MEDIATOR.

SALVATION IS THROUGH SANCTIFYING GRACE.

This is the threefold lesson of the Scripture now before us; and of all Scripture.

Salvation is mediatorial. "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." In these six words, the Gospel is all preached. They make

the difference between all other men and Christians. They make the difference between eternal death and everlasting life. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Man is by nature fallen from God. All ages bear their testimony to this sad truth. The savage, in the rude stone on which he lays his handful of parched corn, to turn away the anger that might disappoint his hunting season. And Socrates, in his admissions of the want of some one, to restore man to the favour of his Maker. The angle, which our sinful nature takes from the right line of holiness, goes on increasing with our life. And man, was left, without the Gospel, to desperation or indifference, or the absurd reliance upon acts, which he, who owes his best to God might render, to make up for his innumerable sins. A fallen nature had no power in it, to rise again to its first source, and go on right. The awful space, at which our sins have set us from our God, defied exertion, while it baffled hope. But God had pity on His creatures. And in the counsels of the Godhead, inscrutable in knowledge as they are ineffable in mercy, the Incarnate Son came in, between the nature that had sinned, and the nature that must punish sin. His Cross became the bridge, by which the sinner might return to God. His blood became the price, by which the ransom might be paid. And in His flesh, the point of contact was revealed, by which believers, one with Christ, might thus be one with God. Philosophy had never dreamed of such an intervention. Philosophy in vain attempts its compre-

hension. It is. It is revealed. "Sirs, what shall I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Go to Him. Embrace His Cross. Be washed in its atoning blood. You shall be made clean from your sins. You shall be pardoned. You shall be accepted. You shall be saved. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." But it must be the belief of unreserve. It must be the belief of self-surrender. It must be the belief of dependence, and confidence, and submission. It must be the belief, that gives up all, and takes God's word. It must be the belief, that gives itself up, and takes Christ. You have cast yourself in perfect confidence, and unreserved affection, on some loved one of the earth. Another's will, your will. Another's way, your way. Another's heart, your heart. Another's life, your life. It is the highest happiness of earth. It is the nearest antepast of heaven. But even more than that, is the surrender of the soul to Jesus Christ, which in the Gospel is involved, and on which Salvation turns. More than that, as He in His Divine humanity is the chief among ten thousand, more lovely than the loveliest of the earth. More than that, as He in His incarnate Godhead can enter into us, and we can enter into Him, so that we are one with Him, and are partakers, actual and immediate, of His imparted holiness, of His imparted self. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Believe on Him, as the sacrifice for sin. Believe on Him, as the propitiation for your sins. Believe on Him, as your substitute as a lost sinner, to endure the penalty your sins had pur-

chased ; to re-open for you the heaven your sins had closed. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. Do not inquire the Why. Do not inquire the How. Do as the jailer did. Believe. Do as Paul did. Believe. Do as the Israelites did when serpents bit them in the wilderness. Believe. "It came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked upon the brazen serpent, he lived." "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up ; that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.

" Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee ;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy side, a healing flood,
Be, of sin, the double cure ;
Save from wrath, and make me pure.

Again, as Salvation is Mediatorial, without price or purchase of our own, but all by Christ, through Christ, in Christ ; so it is through Sacramental union with the Mediator. When the jailer had addressed to Paul and Silas, those expressive words in which his whole heart went from him, in anxious seeking for Salvation, they said, " Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he, and all his, straightway." The Apostles did not leave him, as you

see, with the mere injunction to believe: although in its adoption alone, Salvation could be had. The Scripture does not teach that Salvation is through feeling merely; however deep, sincere, or fervent. Or through the reception of dogmas, though it be that greatest and most gracious, Salvation only through a crucified Redeemer. They wait on, more than midnight though it was, to teach him, and his family. They spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. What they taught is not told us. What it would be, we can judge. They would teach him, as St. Peter taught the first converted on the day of Pentecost. Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. They would repeat to him, no doubt, the terms of their great commission, as the Lord Himself commanded, Go ye, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And again, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And doubtless they would tell him what the Saviour said to Nicodemus, Verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and of the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whatever their teaching may have been, all midnight as it was, and bruised and smarting as they must have been, he was baptized—no waiting till to-morrow; no waiting till they came again; no waiting for whatever cause—he was baptized, he, and all his, straightway. Regenerate with water and

the Holy Ghost, they were grafted into the body of Christ's Church ; and became, as you have, and your children, through the tender mercy of the Lord, " members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven."

But this was not the end. *Salvation is Mediatorial. Salvation is through Sacramental union with the Mediator.* And yet it may not be complete, and the sad soul may still be lost. Complete Salvation is through sanctifying grace. They that are born anew of water and of the Spirit, must daily be renewed. The new birth is nothing but as it begins the new and holy life. And mark its beautiful proportions and results in the case now before us. Look at the man by nature. And then regard him as the child of grace. A heathen,—a jailer ; thrusting these men of God into the dungeon ; making their feet fast in the stocks ; sleeping while they suffered ; untouched by their sweet voices, as they sang with angels in that midnight hymn ; alive to nothing but himself ; his only thought, when the earthquake had aroused him, of his secular interests, and of his personal regards ; ready for self-destruction at an instant when he supposed them sacrificed : what dreadful depths of desperation in his natural heart. He sees the faithfulness of the Apostles, in taking no advantage of their liberty. He hears the manly voice of generous Paul, assuring him that all was right, and pleading with him for his own life. He remembers what he has heard of their divine message, of their marvellous miracles, of their spiritual teachings. He is convinced that such

men must be sent of God. He goes trembling to them as His Messengers and Ministers. He falls down before them, in his reverence of Him, in them. He cries out with intensest agony of soul, Sirs, what must I do—even such an one as I am, so great a sinner—to be saved? They answer, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. He listens to their teachings. He sits down as a little child at their bruised feet. He receives the washing of regeneration at their hands. He bares his brow to bear the Cross from which its waters dropped. He is a new creature in Christ Jesus. And he demonstrates it by works of piety and love. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. And in that house, that night, heaven was begun.

I might dilate upon the thoughts and themes which this most beautiful narrative must suggest. But I will rather leave them to your hearts. I commend them to you for the private meditation of your solitary hours not only, but for your domestic application as the pattern of your houses, and the consecration of your hearts. Christianity is social. It is pre-eminently a home religion. It consecrates the marriage bed. It consecrates the cradle. It consecrates the coffin. It sheds its blessing, if men will, on all that lies between them. The altar on the hearth is the protection and the glory of the house. It was so, even in that Philippian jail. The words of the Apostle are, Thou shalt be saved and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he was

baptized, he and all his straightway. Beloved, who, as parents, imitate the example of the Philippian jailer, bring the little children whom the Lord hath lent you, and make them His in holy baptism. Lead them, from earliest childhood, to the house of God, that they may hear His word. Teach them, yourselves, when you sit in the house, and when you walk by the way, when evening draws its curtain round your hearth, and when the morning wakes your household to new life, its saving truths, its holy precepts, its attractive promises. Send them to him, who is their pastor for the Lord, that he may nourish them as lambs of His pasture, and mature them for His fold in heaven. And constantly present before them, and enforce the precepts by your own example, the sacred duty and the blessed privilege of the self-dedication, which the laying on of hands provides for them, with grace if they will have it, to prepare them for that sacred feast which Jesus spread for them and you, and sealed it to you in His blood. Then shall it be written in heaven of you, as in the Scriptures, of the jailer at Philippi, he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. Then, at each consecrated hearth of yours, heaven shall begin on earth.

“ All blessings of the breast and womb,
Of heaven and earth beneath,
Of converse high and sacred home,
Be yours, in life and death.
Only kneel on, nor turn away
From the pure shrine, where Christ, to-day
Will store each flower, ye, duteous, lay,
For an eternal wreath.

SERMON XII.

GOD'S OPENING OF THE HEART.

ACTS XVI. 14.—Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

THE subject of these words was Lydia. She was a woman of Thyatira. Her occupation was the sale of purple vestments. Business had doubtless brought her to Philippi. In this way she was brought to Paul; and so to Christ. Such are the orderings of Providence. We know not what a day may bring forth. We know not to what our steps are tending. But we know this; if we walk in the fear of God, He will direct our paths. In the pursuit of a lawful calling, upon a social or charitable errand, no matter how, or why, if we desire God, we shall find Him; and find peace. It was clearly so with Lydia. She was engaged in business. She had a family, to care for. She was away from home. Yet she found time to go to prayers. And being there when Paul came, she found Christ. I wonder more of you, my brethren, do not make the same experiment. *You* cannot come amiss. For Paul is always here; and Christ, if you will hear them.

It was the Sabbath day : our Saturday. Paul and Silas were staying, for a few days, at Philippi. He had come to Macedonia by express command of God. In a vision in the night, "There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us!" Immediately he started with his friend : assuredly gathering, that the Lord had called him, "for to preach the Gospel unto them." While they waited for the will of God, they went out of the city, on the Sabbath, by the river-side, not to indulge their taste for natural beauty, or to dream the day away in dim poetic reveries, but to a place where prayer was wont to be made. There was but one temple for the Jews. Wherever they were gathered, in sufficient numbers, there were synagogues. In other cases, there were rooms, or places, as at Philippi, by a river-side, or, it might be in a grove, where they were wont to meet for prayer. They were brought up in the religious duty of a daily service. And it was not disregarded even in foreign cities, or with strangers. It would seem, that then as now, the men were wont to delegate the duties of religion, to their wives, their mothers, and their sisters. And so, the sacred record is, "we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither." "And a certain woman, named Lydia," the evangelist continues, "a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us." The phrase, "which worshipped God," is most expressive. It denotes that Lydia, though by birth a heathen, and so the worshipper of many gods, had found the only and

the true. Consorting with the Jews, she had been drawn to their religion. And so upon the Sabbath, at their place of prayer, she was present. And with such providential mercy : present, when Paul was there, to speak to them of Jesus.

The text then follows : “ Whose heart the Lord opened ; that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.” A passage, most remarkable, “ Whose heart the Lord opened.” Had it ended there, the vulgar would have said at once, another miraculous conversion ! But, it adds, at once, “ that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.” I infer from this :

- I. THAT THE LORD MUST OPEN THE HEART, BEFORE
PREACHING CAN BE PROFITABLE ;
- II. THAT HE OPENS THE HEART TO MAKE IT SO ;
- III. THAT HE OPENS THEIR HEARTS, WHO ARE IN THE
FAITHFUL USE OF ORDINARY MEANS ;
- IV. THAT THE PROFITABLE PREACHING OF THE GOS-
PEL WILL RESULT IN BAPTISM ;
- V. THAT CHRISTIAN BAPTISM IS FOR HOUSEHOLDS ;
- VI. THAT TO BE BAPTIZED IS TO UNDERTAKE THE
WHOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF CHRISTIANITY.

I. The Lord must open the heart, that preaching may be profitable. Too much is often made of preaching. More has been ascribed to it by some, than

ever has been claimed by Romanists, as the effect of Sacraments. But preaching is, after all, man's work. Paul preached. Apollos preached. I preach. As preaching, merely, it is but proclamation of God's truth. An Apostle may do it. Or a Bishop. Or a Priest. Or a Deacon. It matters not, who does it. It is a sinful man, proclaiming, to other sinful men, the word of God. It may be "with wisdom of words," or it may not. "The preaching of the Cross," it must be, if it is God's word. "The preaching of the Cross," it may be; and yet "foolishness," "to them that perish." "The power of God," only to them, whom it shall save. You clearly see, then, that it is not preaching merely, that can save. In them, that "are saved, it is the power of God." "To them that perish," the same preaching will be "foolishness." There must be else, and more; or preaching is in vain. Preaching may be argument. Preaching may be rhetoric. It may be conclusive. It may be persuasive. Were it addressed to a court, upon a point of law, it might convince them. Were it addressed to a jury, on a point of fact, it might unite them. But, it is addressed to a sinful heart. Its purpose is to turn it, against itself. It has the devil and the world, for odds against it. And Apollos found, and Paul, though mightiest in the Scriptures, and in humanity, that to "preach Christ crucified" might be to Jews and Greeks, "a stumbling-block" and "foolishness," unless the Jews and Greeks were "called," and, only then, would be the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Therefore, the record of the Scripture, which declares, of Lydia, "whose heart the Lord opened."

II. And, now, opened for what? Why was not that the end of it? Surely, one may say, when the Lord has opened any heart, it is enough. Grace is triumphant. Salvation is attained. But, no! "Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things, which were spoken of Paul." Surely, a strange connection. God's work, but the preparation for man's work. The Lord opening Lydia's heart, that she may attend unto the things which were spoken of Paul. Why did not God Himself directly do, through the same grace, which opened Lydia's heart, the thing for which she was to attend on Paul? The obvious answer is, because it pleases Him to work by means. When Cornelius was moved by the Holy Ghost, to become the first-fruits of the Gentiles unto Christ, Peter was sent after, to Joppa. When Saul was called directly by the voice of Jesus Christ, and instantly obeyed the call, the Lord sent Ananias to him, to tell him what He would have him do. And now, when the Lord opened Lydia's heart, it was that Paul might lead her in the way, in which she ought to go.

III. If it be asked, why Lydia was selected for this gracious work, we find the answer, in her character and conduct. She was a devout woman. She was found at prayer. She was an humble woman. She doubted, even when she had been made a Christian, whether she

was worthy to receive Apostles. She was a charitable woman. Her heart and home were opened to them, at a moment. She was an earnest woman. She besought them first; and then constrained them, to remain. As Jacob would not let the Angel go, until he blessed him. Lydia had been brought up a heathen. She had been divinely brought within the shadow of the Jewish Church. She had embraced its privileges, as she had had the opportunity. She was using faithfully the means, which God extended to her. And, trace the progress, in her, of the work of Grace. Apostles were her fellow-worshippers. They had the words of everlasting life, from God. God meant not only her Salvation, and her household's; but, that, from her, a Church should spring. He disposed her to seriousness. He engaged her interest. He lifted her affections from the world. Her heart was opened. She attended to the words of Paul. She acknowledged them as sent from God. She received them. She adopted them. She appropriated them. She felt and owned her sinfulness. She felt and owned the Cross, as God's provision for the sinner. She embraced it, as the provision for her necessity; and made it personal, as the means of her salvation. As when the warm Spring winds have swept across the field, which, in the Autumn, was turned up, and April showers have softened it, the seed, that falls, sinks in, takes kindly root, softens, and swells, and germinates: and, in the leafy month of June, the blushing clover almost hides the fence, and sways with every wind, and sweetens all the atmosphere. It would

not be so on a rock. It could not be so, on an unploughed plain. It could not be so, without seed. It could not be so, without warmth and wet; the southern breezes, and the soaking showers.

IV. What the things were which were spoken of Paul, to which Lydia attended, we are not told. The Holy Scripture passes rapidly from causes to effects; and dwells but lightly on the process. Doubtless, he told them of their sins: "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." Doubtless, he told them of their danger: "except ye repent, ye shall all perish." Doubtless, he told them of the fountain, where alone their sins could be washed out: "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Doubtless, he told them, that believing penitents must seek that cleansing in the wave of baptism: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins;" "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Certain it was, that in attending unto the things, which were spoken of Paul, for which the Lord opened her heart, she was brought to be baptized.

V. And she was not baptized alone; but, with her household. She was a mother. And had children from the Lord. She was a mistress. And had work-people and servants. She, perhaps, had sisters, brothers, parents. Whoever they were, the words of Paul, which she attended to, after her heart was opened of the Lord, impressed her so, with her responsibility for other souls

as well as her own, that she could find no rest, till they had all received with her the "washing of regeneration."

VI. And there it did not end. It was a heathen city. The colony was Roman. The cruel hands, which framed the Cross for Christ, had kindred, at Philippi. But a few days, and the prison, chains, and stocks had wreaked, on Paul and Silas, the vindictive rage of Rome. To be connected with them, or to harbour them, was to incur, as accessories before the fact, the penalty of their profession. And, yet, in spite of all this, at the risk of her business, at the risk of her reputation, at the risk of her liberty, at the risk of her life—and, more than all these, to a mother, at her children's risk—she took these wandering victims of the Cross into her house, and kept them there. And, undismayed by all that heathen rage could do, when they had been released from their unjust imprisonment, and while the stripes and bruises of the scourge and stocks were yet upon their flesh, they "entered into the house of Lydia, and when they had seen the brethren"—the company of Christians of which Lydia and her household were the first—"they comforted them, and departed." Thus did she undertake, and gloriously sustain, when every tree might be a cross, the whole responsibility of the religion of the Crucified.

The story of this Thyatiran woman whom the Apostles met with, at Philippi, though it occupies two verses only, has lessons in it to reach round the world.

From what small beginnings, God brings great and

glorious results. In ten years, Paul at Rome in prison writes a letter to Philippi. The Bishop of Philippi is its bearer. It is addressed to priests, to deacons, and to laymen. It recognizes as already there, a strong and powerful Church. A Church, which not only carries on its home-work in the Gospel of the Saviour, but is forward in its bounty to all other places; strengthening the hands of the Apostles in their sacred trust, to preach the Gospel everywhere, to every creature. And the cradle of this great and influential Church was in the house of Lydia.

How perfectly the Christian woman is portrayed in these few strokes, from Luke's expressive pencil. She was found at "a place where prayer was wont to be made;" like Anna, who departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers, night and day. "She attended to the things which were spoken of Paul;" thought of them, dwelt on them, took them into her heart, and into her life. As that most blessed Mary kept all the things she heard the shepherds say, "and pondered them in her heart;" "a Being, breathing thoughtful breath." And like that younger Mary, who sat down, at the beloved feet of Jesus, and heard His word, the favour that she begged of them, when they had made her happy in her calling after Christ, was, that, they would come into her house and stay there; that she might hang upon their words, and live by their example.

In what lifelike beauty does a single word present her to us, as a Christian Mother. "She was baptized

and her household." "Behold I and the children which God has given me." If religion were to leave the world, its latest lingering would be in a Mother's heart. If Christianity were meant especially, for any class of persons, it was for mothers. And more than all preachers, more than all martyrs, I had almost said more even than Silas, or than Paul, have Christian Mothers done for Christianity. The blessing it has shed on home, they deepest feel, and they most gratefully acknowledge. And, in that sacred empire of their own, their influence is irresistible, who use it in the way that Lydia used it :

"True to the kindred points of heaven and home."

And what a reach of greatness in service, in endurance, in disregard of loss or risk, of danger or of death, in Lydia's woman heart. The hostess of Apostles. The hostess of the Church. And this, when Apostles were outcasts, and the Church in bonds, and Christianity was martyrdom. And it has ever been so. The letters of St. Paul bear record everywhere, to woman's faithfulness and self-devotion to the Gospel. Name after name is chronicled in lines of light, in his epistles to the Romans, the Corinthians, the Philippians, of holy women who laboured with him in the Lord. As when the blessed One Himself was here, they were the followers of His bleeding feet ; they were the comforters of His sad hours of weariness and solitude and sorrow ; they were the nearest to His Cross in the worst hour of its atoning agony ; they were the earliest at His grave, to anoint Him with their tears, and embalm Him with the fragrance of their love.

Beloved, whom the Scripture we have now considered most especially concerns, and to whom Lydia's beautiful example most immediately appeals, I beseech you lay it to your hearts. If they are not yet opened of the Lord, to attend to the things which are spoken of Paul, pursue His grace as she did, in the place where prayer is wont to be made. Be with the women which resort there : and at an hour when you expect it not, the blessing may be yours. Embrace it when it offers you its mercy, with a woman's unreserving love, and give your minds and hearts like Lydia, to attend to that which Paul has written for your learning, and which the Church proclaims in all your ears. Yield to its gentle guidance, till it bring you to the Font, the Chancel rail, the Altar where the Lamb of God perpetuates His Cross. If you have households, make them His. You would not be in heaven without your children. Then ingraft them in the Church in holy Baptism, and within its sacred precincts train them up to be with Him, before His throne, who came to them upon the shameful Tree. And in the firm, consistent, constant, unreserving love of Christ and of His Church, be to the world in which you live, the Lydias of your time : women in modesty, in quietness, in gentleness, in all the sacred graces which adorn, as gold and jewels never could, women who trust in God ; and women too in firmness, in endurance, in devotion to the Church, in comprehension of your sex, your race, your kind, that every hearth of yours may be an altar, lit perpetually with sacred fires ; that every home of yours may

be a Church, the image and reflection of the home,
where Christ will be with His beloved ones in heaven.

Sweet is the smile of home ; the mutual look,

When hearts are of each other sure ;

Sweet all the joys that crowd the household nook,

The haunt of all affections pure ;

Yet, in the world, even these abide, and we

Above the world our calling boast :

Once gain the mountain top, and thou art free :

Till then, who rest presume, who turn to look, are lost.

SERMON XIII.

THE ONE THING LACKING.

ST. MATTHEW XIX. 22.—But, when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

IF three persons, professing to be eye-witnesses of the same transaction, should differ materially in their testimony, they would mutually discredit each other. Should they agree in the very same words, they would all be suspected of collusion. *Substantial uniformity with circumstantial variety*, is, thus, the admitted test of creditable testimony. It is the constant endurance of this natural and universal test, which renders the combined testimony of the four Evangelists a bulwark so impregnable to the credibility of our religion. In no case do they repeat each other. In no case is there any actual discrepancy. For the great facts of our religion, and for its chief teachings, we have before us always three and sometimes four independent witnesses: agreeing just as honest witnesses agree in the great points; and, as they do, as certainly, differing from each other, in the small. A happier illustration need not be asked for, than the story which supplies the

text; as it is given respectively, by Matthew, Mark and Luke. I can but now direct your attention to it. In treating it, I shall refer indifferently to all the three: and make my narrative, the aggregate of all.

Among the multitudes of every class and kind that came to Jesus, was a rich young man, who was a ruler. He ran to Him. He kneeled to Him. The object of his reverential earnestness, was everlasting life. He had come somehow to believe that Jesus could direct him to it; and he came to ask Him: Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? In fewest words, "What shall I do, to be saved?" Partly to check the habit but too common, of employing flattering words, and partly to assert His right, as God, to the exclusive sense of "good," our Lord, before He answered him, reminded him that there is but one good, "that is God." "But," He continued, "if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments:" in other words, "Follow after holiness; without which, none shall see the Lord." The young man was in earnest; and asked "Which" commandments? Jesus replied by quoting from the Ten: adding, as Matthew has it, that new commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The young man was as honest, as he was earnest; and replied at once, "All these have I kept, from my youth up: what lack I, yet?" He had been carefully brought up by pious parents. The grace of God had blessed their efforts and his own. His conscience pleaded to no overt act of disobedience to the Decalogue. And, yet, it whispered, that is not

enough ; there must be more for me to do ; “ What lack I yet ? ” We cannot wonder that of such a person, so young, so simple-minded, so much in earnest, so humble in his estimate of his best service, so bent on being saved, it should be written, “ then Jesus looking on him, loved him.” And, with a deeper love, that He saw into his heart ; and read its fatal fault ; and yearned that it might yet be cured.

“ Thou know’st our bitterness—our joys are thine—

No stranger, Thou, to all our wanderings wild :

Nor, could we bear to think, how every line

Of us, Thy darken’d likeness and defil’d,

Stands, in full sunshine of Thy piercing eye,

But, that Thou call’st us Brethren : Sweet repose

Is in that word—the Lord, who dwells on high,

Knows all ; yet loves us better than He knows.”

Then Jesus beholding him loved him ; and said unto him : One thing thou lackest. If thou wilt be perfect—do all there is for thee to do to inherit that eternal life which is the purchase of my Cross—go, and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven : and come take up the Cross and follow me. “ But ”—alas, for such conclusion from such promising beginning !—“ When the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful : for he had great possessions.”

The young man, whom these Scriptures thus present to us, was evidently in earnest as to his salvation. Jesus was occupied. He was surrounded by a throng of mothers, with their little children. Some of them

He had taken up into His arms. On others He had laid His holy hands. Others no doubt were clinging to His garment, or climbing up His knees. It was at this moment, when He was so engaged, that this young man came running to Him ; at once, and earnestly addressed Him. We often see such earnestness in secular pursuits. Not often, in regard to the Salvation of the soul. Especially, I grieve to say, not often with young men.

And yet his earnestness did not permit him to be rude. He was reverent in manner. He kneeled to Jesus. He accosted Him as, Master. He addressed Him as Good Master. That he was so young, and yet a ruler, had not divested him of reverence. He was a pattern, in this respect, for our young men. Ours is a rude and disrespectful age. It pays but little deference to age, to rank, to excellence. If the next generation shall run riot, as the last has, our young men, when they are grandfathers, will find none, to do them reverence. I commend to them for imitation the young man whom Jesus looked upon and loved. I would that they might all be such.

Still farther, he was what men sometimes call, by a strange misuse of the word, a moral man. He had not stolen. He had killed no one. He was obedient as a son. As if the very seat of morals must not be the heart. As if a dog might not be whipped, till he should never look towards a sheep. As if it mattered which way the hands point upon the clock-face, if the wheel work should not move. There are no morals

without true religion. It is not being moral, to do this, or not do that, because the law commands it. Nor, yet, because it is the will of God. Men are then only moral, when for the love of God they do the law of God. The young man in the Gospel was, however, what the world calls moral. He had kept the commandments. He had kept them all. He had kept them always. We shall see that, that, was not enough.

He was moreover what few are, whom the world calls moral. He was humble. He felt and owned that when he had done all that he was commanded, he was an unprofitable servant. His question still was, "What good thing shall I do?" His cry was still, "What lack I, yet?"

Surely of such an one we may conclude, he was almost a Christian. And the Saviour's answer was, "*one thing*, thou lackest." But that "*one thing*" was more than all the rest; and quite too much for him. And that "almost" was in his way as fatally, as in Agrippa's, when Paul "almost" persuaded him to be a Christian.

What is it, then, that to an earnest man, a man of reverence, a moral man, as men esteem it, an humble man, almost a Christian, may yet prevent his being altogether such and frustrate his pursuit of everlasting life? The Scripture now before us furnishes the answer. "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the Cross, and follow me." It is the unreserved surrender of the heart. A fairer case of expectation of

eternal life was never seen. So fair, that Jesus looking on him loved him. And yet, when he was told to give up his own will, and walk no longer in his own fond way, and sell his property, and give the proceeds to the poor, and have no treasure out of heaven, and take the Cross up, and come after Christ, and be as poor as He was; it was all too much for him. He could not take eternal life at such a sacrifice. That one thing which he lacked was more than he could do. And he went off very sorrowful, and very rich. And yet it must be so, beloved: it must certainly be so. Eye-servants, the world all over, are despised. You would esteem but lightly the strictest service of a child, that was performed from a dry sense of duty, in an unloving spirit. And he would be the merest fool that would accept a hand without a heart in it, although it were all gold; with diamonds, for fingers. And is it only God that does not care for hearts? Or is the service that leaves out the heart the training for that world where hearts are all? No, my beloved! God is a Spirit. And they who worship Him, must worship Him, in spirit. Not to give Him the heart; not to give Him the whole heart; not to give Him His whole way with the heart, is not to come to Him at all; is to have no contact with Him; is to be out of Him; and so without Him. We must set lightly by our ways. We must take His will. We must go His way. That our heart may be where He is, we must have our treasure there. That we may be with Him where He is crowned, we must be with Him under His Cross. We must follow

Him in love, that we may follow Him into life. If a man love me he will keep my commandments. The love, you see, is first and chief. And my Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

“ We barter life for pottage ; sell true bliss

For wealth or pow’r, for pleasure or renown :

Thus, Esau-like, our Father’s blessing miss :

Then, wash, with fruitless tears, our faded crown.”

How true a picture of this rich young man. “ But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful : for he had great possessions.” And we hear no more of him. Very sorrowful, and very rich. What an inscription for a tomb-stone ! What a record for eternity !

How many are there here, who “ barter life for pottage ? ” Who “ sell true bliss, for wealth or power, for pleasure or renown ? ” There are but few among God’s moral creatures, who do not sometimes own His power. Who are not sometimes drawn to Him, they know not how or why. In whom the magnet of the heart does not, in halcyon moments, tremble and turn towards its centre. The hold of God on human souls is never wholly lost, until life’s hold is lost. In one way or another, a providential ordering or a Church lesson, a dry leaf driven by a November gust, a new grave suddenly encountered, or a solemn text ; in one way or another, one is led to think and feel about eternal life. The heart has never satisfied itself. The world has

never satisfied it. It aches. It longs. It yearns. It almost brings itself to ask, what shall I do? But it has set a golden altar up and paid its homage there, and bound itself to it; and when the answer is, "Go, and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven," it shrinks away, in conscious slavery; and will be rich, and sorrowful. Or it has taken the lust of power into its secret places, and grown mad for rule; and when the answer of the Crucified is, Follow me, and be as I am, "meek and lowly of heart," and "take my yoke," and wear it; it is ashamed of Christ and of His Gospel, and turns to the wild crowd that crucified Him. Or it has made its court to pleasure, and chosen the primrose path of dalliance, before the steep, rough path of duty and of glory; and pampered every sense, till, like the Sybarite, a wrinkled rose-leaf on the couch were agony: and when the answer from the Lord is, take the Cross and follow after me, it turns in pale dismay and hugs the gilded cloud, and thinks it heaven. In every case, and in ten thousand more, the moral is the same: "but when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." In every case, that searching scripture of the Saviour has its fearful application: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Its argument is imminent, is irresistible, is personal to every individual soul, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

To the young men who hear me, the affecting scripture which has been considered is of peculiar interest and claims a special application. It takes one of themselves and sets him, as it were, beside the Christ. His earnestness, his simpleness, his humbleness, his anxious seeking for salvation, secure His sympathy and engage His affection. What a Timothy seemed there! Or what a Stephen! But when the Cross laid to his heart its searching test. When the surrender of the man was made the good thing, to inherit everlasting life. When to be poor, when to be mean, when to be despised, when to be persecuted, when to follow Christ, and suffer what He suffered, and die with Him as He died, was the only way to heaven, no Timothy was there; no Stephen. The Christ is with us, now. He looks with yearning love upon the young. He sees their dangers. He sees their difficulties. He sees the snares that everywhere beset them. He sees the weak and sinful nature that forever tempts itself. He looks on them, and loves them, and He yearns for their salvation. And He says to them, "My Son, give me thy heart!" And to the young man that will hear Him, and comply with His request, and be His in his heart and in his life, He gives Himself, and in Himself gives happiness and heaven. While they that turn from Him, however rich, however great, however what the world calls happy, stifling the spark of the divinity within them that was kindling towards its source, and turning back from Him, in whom alone is immortality, go sorrowful through life, to be more sorrowful in

death, and fuller still of sorer sorrow through eternity.

Dearly beloved, of either sex, of every age, of all conditions and in whatever circumstances, there is but one way into life. It is the way by which the Saviour went and bore His Cross. To be rich, to be in honour among men, to live in pleasures, to do our own will, to have our own way, to be all our own: these are not way marks of salvation. The way to Heaven is marked with the deep tracks of His bare feet, who went before us, in it, with the load of all our sins. The way to Heaven is marked with tears wrung from His agonizing soul, who in the garden prayed and wept alone. The way to Heaven is marked with blood crushed from the bursting heart which broke for us on Calvary. There are not many to be saved. "Lord, are there few," one asked Him, in the days of His poor flesh, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" He did not then say how many, or how few. But what He did say is of fearful import to the souls that live at ease, and will be rich and bear no Cross: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." But in another place, He gives the answer with a startling plainness. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Beloved, there are not many to be saved. It is a sad, but certain truth. It is the time now for you

to choose between the many and the few. To come to Jesus from the world, to come to Jesus from yourself, to come to Jesus with your heart, to come to Jesus on His Cross, and take His Cross upon yourself: this is to have Him for your Saviour, and to find through Him the way to everlasting life. I beseech you, if you have not made the choice, to make it now. I beseech you, if you have not resolved to come to Jesus Christ, to resolve to-day, to come to Him. For now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation.

SERMON XIV.

THE SAVIOUR KNOCKING AT THE DOOR.

REVELATION III. 20.—Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

CONSIDER these words uttered by some great one of the earth, a king, or governor, or some distinguished stranger. Or, suppose them spoken, by some dear and honoured friend, in whom love mixed itself with reverence: so that the fond heart rang out, to him, as Memnon's Statue, to the first ray of morning. How they would tell of condescension! How they would stir delight! How they would win compliance! How the heart would listen for that knock! How the door would open, at that voice! How the best would be provided; and not good enough, for such a guest! And how that promised entertainment, at that envied board, would fill the heart and crowd out every meaner hope! And yet, He that sayeth these things is "the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." It is Jesus Christ who stands at the door, and knocks. It is Jesus Christ who comes in to him that hears, and opens. It is Jesus Christ who

offers Himself to be the guest. And who promises to take His loving ones that open unto Him, to be with Him for ever. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock ; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

"Behold !" It is the Saviour's summons to attention. It is addressed to hearts : to every heart. And never was attention asked to words that more deserved it. They settle the great question of our moral nature, in its relations and responsibilities to God. They state in fewest and clearest words, His dealings with our race : how He offers to save us ; how He expects us to accept His offer. They solve and reconcile the questions, which perplexed humanity has suffered from, and sunk under, in wilful recklessness, or else in blank despair. And in the clear mild light, which they diffuse on man, his hopes, his duties, and his destiny, as lost, and yet a moral and immortal creature, they disabuse the simplest heart, which will receive them, of maiden or of child, of doubts and difficulties, which occupied and baffled the lost spirits of our greatest sacred Poet : when, with all their gifts of intellect, and arts of subtlest casuistry, they

"reason'd high

Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate ;
Fix'd fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost."

Beautiful consideration of the Scriptures for children and the childlike : that, to such, there are no

doubts; for such no madness, and no melancholy, in His deepest mysteries. A thought that gladdened with its beautiful benignity the loving heart of Jesus. "In that hour, Jesus rejoiced in Spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

"Behold, I stand at the door." We pass a house. A stranger stands upon the porch. He waits, for entrance. He has long been waiting. In his meekness and patience, he still waits. He stands at the door. As we look again, there are wounds in those dear hands. There are wounds in those dear feet. There is blood upon that coarse garment, where it covers that dear side. His "head is filled with dew," and His "locks with the drops of the night." Yet, as we look narrowly, a glory crowns them: and His countenance reminds us of the Mount of the Transfiguration. And yet He stands at that poor door, although He made the worlds; and waits as any servant might, or beggar, for a crust of bread, although He is the Lord of heaven and earth. And that house is a human heart. And He that stands there—how we shrink from keeping any one in waiting at our door!—He that stands there is the Lord, that made it, has redeemed it, is to judge it. My beloved, I would have you think of this. Whoever you may be, you have a heart. Whoever you may be, it must be saved or lost. Whoever you may be, He is now standing; has been standing, it may be,

twenty, forty, sixty years, waiting, at your door, as no servant would wait; waiting, at your door, as you would let no beggar wait: that He may enter in and save you.

Still Thou, for us art listening long
To rise, and let Thee in;
We heed Thee not, we do Thee wrong,
And stay, in ways of sin:
For all too well, Thy spirit knows
Short time doth yet remain,
Before the eternal door shall close,
And *we* shall knock in vain.

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.” Who ever knocked, before, at the door of his own house? Who ever knocked, before, where he had right of entrance? Who ever knocked, where he designed to force admission? Could there be livelier illustration of the perfect freedom of the human heart? I stand at the door, and knock. I approach your house. I ascend the steps. I wait. I knock. It is to say, I desire admission. It is to say, I cannot demand it. It is to say, I depend on your allowance. You are not at home. Or you are engaged. Or no one comes. I knock again. I knock, it may be, thrice. I go away. I sought an entrance. I did what I could to gain it. I was unsuccessful. Dearly beloved, it is just so with your hearts. He made them. He preserves them. He fills them full of life, and health, and joy. He desires more for them: even their perfection and salvation. But Creator though He is, Preserver and Redeemer, He but seeks: He cannot force it. Moral na-

tures must be free. "I stand at the door, and knock." How many ways He knocks! *You are yet young.* In every pulse of your full heart He knocks. Your cheerful days, your nights without a dream, your sports that never tire, your pleasures ever new: how He knocks at every youthful heart! Dear children, how He knocks at yours. Do you hear Him? You had better listen. He may knock; and go away. *You are in middle life.* A child is born to you. It is of God. Children and the fruit of the womb, are an heritage and gift that cometh from the Lord. He is knocking at your heart. Or He withdraws your darling. Well. You did not hear Him when He brought it. He has come for it. He is knocking at your heart. Will you now hear Him? He may never knock again. *Your life has fallen into the sere and yellow leaf.* The almond tree is blooming. Even a grasshopper is now a burden. How slowly beats your pulse. He is knocking at your heart. He will not knock again. The Sexton never knocks. *How many ways the Saviour stands and knocks.* In His holy word, by His holy Sacraments, through His holy Spirit. Every time a lesson of the holy book is read. Every time a holy text is wrought into a sermon. Every time a holy sacrament is noticed or administered; and now especially, when I, like John the Baptist, have stood here, and summoned you, week after week, to come to confirmation, and to bring your children; the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Repent ye, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand. Come unto me, all ye that travail, and are heavy laden.

My son, give me thy heart. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock."

"Thou waitest, but we do not hear ;
From heaven, Thou comest down ;
To us, on earth, Thou drawest near,
Thy wandering sheep to own.
Yea, Thou Thyself, to us art come,
And listening at the door,
Seeking, with us to make Thy home,
And dwell for evermore.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him." Again, how beautiful this blending of the divine importunity with human freedom. That Blessed One has freely come from heaven. His loving feet have borne Him here and there, among the abodes of men. He goes about, to do them good. He stands at every door. He knocks. He waits. He cannot bear to go away, and leave no blessing. He knocks again, and waits. Alas, that He should knock, and wait, in vain! Alas, that the din of business, or the hum of pleasure, or the roar of popular applause, should shut so many ears against that still small voice! One cannot hear it for the clank of hammers, or the whirl of the spindles. Another, for the pipe and tabret and viol of the feast. Another, for the mad hurrahs of the excited mob. With others, still, the voices of their home, the accents of the loved one, or the sound of their own thoughts, suffice to drown the whispers of His love. He will not cry nor strive. He stands.

He knocks. He waits. Was it some darling of the earth that was to come, you would not let him wait. He would not have to knock. Before his feet had reached your door, while he was yet a great way off, your quick ear would detect his step, your prompt limbs would anticipate his coming, your glad voice would go out to meet him with a welcome. And it must be so with Jesus. You must hear His voice, for all the stir of earth. You must come to Him, whatever be the urgency of business or the importunity of pleasure. You must be moved by His patient waiting for your heart. You must listen to His gracious calling for you, as He stands and knocks. You must hear it above the voices of the world, the whisperings of nature, the pulses of your heart. You must go down to Him, and open the door to Him, and make Him welcome : or He never will come in. He made the heart. At the sad instant of its ruin He was present, with the purpose of redemption. He redeemed His purpose on the Cross. While yet the morning was but gray, He had come down from heaven, and was standing at its door, and knocked. And yet, it must be opened to Him : or He comes, in vain. It is a free heart. It is your heart. He asks for it. He waits on it. He knocks at it. But He does not take it, but as your free gift. My son, give me thy heart ! My son, give me thy heart ! And you must give it to Him ; or it cannot be His. You must give it to Him ; or it must be Satan's. You must give it to Him ; or it is for ever lost. If not, in vain His Incarnation. If not, in

vain His agony. If not, in vain His death. If not, He comes, He waits, He knocks in vain. And on those two sad words eternity must turn. And all the echoes of that sad eternity will but repeat, while the slow pendulum swings solemnly for ever, those hopeless words—in vain, in vain !

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock : if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him.” There is nothing upon earth, that brings such pleasure to a poor house, as to receive an honourable guest. It is among the beautiful compensations which equalize the levels of our life. With what a generous pride it swells the heart ! With what a genial glow it overspreads the countenance ! What ingenuity it quickens ! What alacrity it animates ! How the best of every thing is brought, and how much better for the cordial welcome that attends it. To the rich, it is a thing of every day. But when the poor man’s hearth is lighted, and the poor man’s board is spread, the house keeps holiday ; and the whole heart is in the feast. It is to this natural instinct that the sacred text appeals. “If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him.” Into our poor homes, the Lord of heaven and earth, at our mere opening, will come. He will sit down by our hearths. He will sup with us at our board. He will be at home with us in our poverty, and condescend to be familiar with our wretchedness. He will draw us with the cords of a man, and stoop to us, that He may raise us to Himself.

For, so, this blessed Scripture reads. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." "And he with me;" in these three words, eternity and heaven. The loving soul that listens for the Lord, and hears him when He comes, and rises at His knock, and comes to Him, and opens for Him, and receives Him for his guest, is to be His for evermore in heaven; and sit down at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. His merit, purchased for him; his fitness furnished; the feast provided; the welcome more than offered. His, only this, that when the Saviour called, he heard; and when he came, he rose to meet Him; and when He knocked, he opened.

"If thou wilt open the door, e'en now
His pledge to thee is given;
Then I will sup with thee below;
And thou with Me in Heaven."

To-day, beloved ones, the gracious Saviour knocks once more, at every heart of all who hear these words. To-day, He specially invites whoever will be His, to rise and come to Him. How long He has been waiting at our door! How often He has knocked, and knocked in vain! What if this coming be His last? What if He never knock again! What if the next bell be the knell that tolls you to the grave? What if He knock next, at the door of other hearts, when the earth rumbles on your coffin-lid? "In the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, Good Lord, deliver us!"

SERMON XV.

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

ST. LUKE VII. 31, 32.—And the Lord said, Whereunto, then, shall I liken the men of this generation? And to what are they like? They are like unto children, sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and saying; We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

How faithfully, how patiently, how lovingly, the blessed Saviour laboured with the people of His day, to turn their hearts to God! Was there an effort, which, He did not make? Was there a penalty, which, He did not pay? Was there an ingenuity of love, which, He did not exert? He became one of them. He went in and out among them. He sympathized with them. He ministered to them. He taught them. He fed them. He wept, with them. He rejoiced, with them. He blessed their children. He healed their sick. He raised their dead. He had done all but die for them; and that He was to do. And, yet, their treatment of Him, He could only liken to the wilfulness of wayward children, when they tease and fret each other, in their plays: “We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.”

That Blessed One has done, long since, the work, which, He was sent to do : died for us, as He lived with us ; risen from the grave, and ascended into heaven, to be the Intercessor for the souls, for which He died. Yet, true to the very letter, the expostulation of the text is, now, as it has always been. The Holy Spirit has been poured out, from on high. The word of God has been completed, and promulgated, and perpetuated. The Church has been established, and extended ; the preacher of the Cross, the ground and pillar of the truth, the minister of grace to all who will receive it ; and still she has to say, to the great mass of men, who hear her voice, as Jesus did before : “ We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced ; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.”

My beloved, is it not the same with you ? Year after year, has not the Spirit pleaded here ? Year after year, has not the Lord been visibly crucified before you ? Year after year, has not the Church renewed to you her blessed ministrations : gathering you here, day after day, to pour your heart out in her prayers ; dividing to you, week after week, the bread of life ; nursing your children at her bosom ; inviting you to joyous feasts ; appointing, for your spiritual discipline, solemn fasts ; filling the font with water for your infants or yourselves ; offering to all, who have repented, and been baptized, the gift of the Holy Ghost ; spreading the banquet of the Saviour’s love, to be the food of your immortal souls ? And yet, to how many of you, must she still apply the Saviour’s mournful words :

“We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.”

It is the office of the Church, entrusted with the blessed Gospel of our Lord, to bring mankind into conformity with Him. She strives to do so, by a skilful adaptation of herself, to these conditions, circumstances, and dispositions; and her failure to effect it, as it is their fault, will, also, be their condemnation.

I. It is the office of the Church, to bring mankind into conformity with Christ. The Church is altogether practical. It is for work. It is to do men good. It is to do them good, as men. It is to take them as they are; and make them better. It is to fit them here, to be in heaven hereafter. The Church can never pass for Christ. No one would ever take the body, for the head; the fold, for the shepherd; the school, for the schoolmaster; the sky, for the sun. Yet, because the Church can never come instead of Christ, it does not follow, that we can do without the Church. The hand is not the head. No one can ever think it is. No one expects a hand to write, without a head. Yet, the head does not write. The head, to write, employs the hand. Both are of God. The one dependent on the other. Yet, neither of the two, to be dispensed with, without a special miracle. As in the natural, so in the spiritual body, Christ is the living and lifegiving head. From Him, all grace, all life proceeds. By Him, the life must be sustained, the grace must be supplied. He is the Author, He, the end, the Alpha, and the Omega,

of the new spiritual creation. But, though He does all, He does all by agencies and means. And the great medium, and effectual agent of His gracious working, is the Church. It is the Church, that is to make Him known, as Saviour of lost man: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." It is the Church, that is to gather men to Him, and make them one in Him: "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It is, in the Church, that they shall find salvation, as being thus, in Him: "the Lord added to the Church, daily, such as should be saved;" and, so, "believers were the more added to the Lord." Nor, is it, in general offices alone, and grand relations to mankind, that the Church is made the Minister, to them, of grace and life. In her, the infant is new-born, to Christ. By her, the child is brought up, "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." She knits the family bond, in Holy Matrimony. Her pastoral care takes in the Christian household, in all its branches, and, in all its interests. She is their teacher. She, their counsellor. She, their comforter. She rejoices, in their joy. She sorrows, in their sorrow. She bears her solace to the mourner. She watches by the sick-bed, with the words of prayer and consolation. She lays their dead, in sacred dust, to wait the morning of the resurrection. And, when He shall come, whose sacred spouse she is, her gracious offices of love will, all be consummated, as she presents them joyfully to Him, "Behold, I, and the children which thou hast given me."

And admirably is she fitted; to accomplish this great work. In the first place, she is made perpetual. To His first twelve, the Saviour said, "Lo, I am with you, alway, even to the end of the world." To fulfil this sacred pledge, He gave her an existence by continual self-perpetuation. She is a tree, whose seed is in itself. Her hold on Him, who is the life, is by the Apostolic succession. What Paul received from Christ, he gave to Timothy. What Timothy received from Paul, he gave, by Paul's command, to others. The sacred line runs on, unbroken, still. Those who had had the Episcopate, through intermediate links, from the Apostle John, transmitted it to English hands. Through English hands, it comes to us, by Seabury and White. The principle of life is in it still; though each successive holder of it dies, and turns to dust; and will be, while the world shall stand. You look in vain, for any parallel to this, unless in that, for which, this is, the line of human kind. The race of man is propagated by a lineal, the sacred race, which is the channel of its blessings, by ministerial succession. They run together, and will run together, till time is swallowed in immortality.

Again. For the discharge of her great trust, the Church is universal. It springs, self-sown, as maple seeds are wafted by the wind; or nutmegs borne, from isle to isle, by birds. There is no limit to this self-propagation. From every shoot spring many; of that many, each makes more. Each of those more, more still. At first, it sprang upon Mount Sion. In a moment, it was

in Samaria. Another, and the shoots of it were seen, at Antioch, at Ephesus, at Smyrna. From these, it spread on every side. The Eastern Indies, Rome, the Islands of the west. Anon, the gracious life was borne, wind-wafted, to this new-discovered world. It is to fill and bless the earth: as certain to be universal, as it has been perpetual.

And, still, again, it is, as I may say, domestic, in its universalness. It lives, by the abodes of men. It plants itself, by human hearths. Its vastness interferes not, with its individuality. It is as much at home, in the straggling hamlet, as in the crowded city. While it comprehends the race, its care is for the man. A blind beggar, or a lone captive, or a lost child, is as much provided for, as a crowned king.

And finally, it is complete, for all their uses. God's ambassador: and yet can wash the feet of slaves. The stay of thrones, and yet, has prayers for dying beggars. The oracle of Heaven, and, yet, with blessings for an infant school. She pervades the spheres, of human life; and is at home, in all. Her influence enters in, where the magnetic fluid cannot come. Her blessing is upon the fields, upon the shops, upon the ships. Her care begins with the cradle, and ends, only, with the grave. The hand which sprinkled the baptismal water, consigns the dust to dust. One only aim, from first to last, that she may so present her children perfect, in Christ Jesus.

II. And this, she strives to do, by skilful adaptation

of herself, to these conditions, circumstances, and dispositions. *How wonderful, her fitness for the training of children!* Such a marvel of sound doctrine, pure morals, and good manners, as her Catechism! Such perfect provision, that it shall be taught to every boy, and every girl, in the conditions, which she lays on infant baptism. Such security, that it shall be well taught, in making it *their* bounden duty, who have care of souls; requiring them to do it, openly, in the Church; enjoining it at stated intervals, on Sundays and Holy days; and providing an end, to stimulate their interest, in making it the school for Confirmation. *What a considerate regard, for all, in the provisions of her sacred service, and her stated teaching!* Into the house of God, she seeks to gather all. The rich and the poor, the young and the old, the wise and the simple, the good and the bad, are brought together, there. How careful she is, to make them all at home! How courteously, that none may seem to be a stranger, she puts into every hand, her book of Common Prayer! How thoughtful she is, of human infirmity, human indifference, human impatience, in the beautiful brevity which marks her Service. Children love to come to it. Young people are insensibly attracted toward it. Manhood and womanhood love it, and lean on it; and tottering old age grows young again, in its renewal of the sacred memories of youth. The educated and refined are never tired of it; as the sweet household song that lulled our childhood, never wearies, on the ear; while humble souls can understand its simple dialect, as well

as their own mothers' words : and slaves that cannot read, by constant hearing, get it self-written on their memories. And, *how bountiful she is of Holy Scripture!* She spares no pains to have the Word of God within the reach of every hand. But this, she knows, is not enough. More have, than read, the Bible. Many read it partially, imperfectly, without reflection. Therefore, is it largely read in every service, and with such variety, that if one part fails, another scarcely can, to reach the heart. Nothing left to human partiality. Nothing subjected to human dishonesty. The order fixed. The portions stated. The old, preparing for the new. The new confirming the old. The Psalmist's song sounding, for ever, in the ear, its sacred undertone.

How admirable her appointment of a daily service, and how true a blessing, when the heart is found, to use it! A day is an atom of life. It is, itself, a life. How needful, that it be set apart to God ; and shielded with His blessing ! How certainly the neglect of it, runs into worldliness and impiety ! How hurtful the distinction, which springs up between religion, as a theory, and a religious practice. Hence the odious separation, between faith and morals. Hence the formalism of a mere Sunday devotion. Hence the depreciation of the acts and offices of worship ; and the over-estimate of preaching. Hence the withdrawal of our time from God, and then, the denial of His right to our possessions. And then, His rejection from our heart. Hence, a name to live, while we are dead ; the form of religion, without the power ; an outside show

of Sabbaths and of Sanctuaries, while God is little in our thoughts, and godliness, a name of other days.

How skilful, to enumerate no more, how full of comfort and of beauty, the order of the Christian Year! The sacred life of Jesus continually lived over. Children, accustomed from their first years, to its engaging mysteries. The doctrines and the duties of the Gospel made actual before us; and their hold upon the heart secured and deepened. New opportunities continually offered for the beginning of a better life. New inducements to self-examination. New motives to self-devotion. The natural feelings all enlisted; the agencies of association brought constantly into play; hope fading into memory, while memory kindles into hope. No note untouched of all, of which the harp of thousand strings is capable or conscious. A time to rejoice, and a time to mourn. The trumpet tones of Advent; the household joys of Christmas; the sober self-denial of the Lenten weeks; the gloom, that gathers about the Crucifixion; the sunburst of the Resurrection; and then, the range of weeks, that follow, after Trinity, only diversified by saintly festivals; which glimmer with a chastened light, along its even track of duties and devotions. How wonderful the adaptation of the Church, to the conditions, circumstances, and dispositions of mankind! How truly she may say, unheeded as she is by them, for whom alone she has her being: "We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept."

III. My beloved, is it so with you? To as many of you as it is so, and just in proportion as it is so, to any of you, I must plainly say, it is your fault; I must affectionately warn you, it will be your condemnation. Your case is clearly written, in that honest Scripture, which I cited as my text, "And the Lord said, Whereunto, shall I liken the men of this generation? And to what are they like? They are like unto children, sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and saying: We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept." It is a homely figure, but exactly to the life. You have seen it, all of you: as children, were yourselves a part of it; and sad to say, as men and women, you enact it still. What tone is there, of sadness or of joy; what voice of lamentation or of praise; what piping to stir up, what mourning to subdue the soul, in which the Church has not addressed you. She has put on her beautiful garments, and brought up the fir-tree, and the pine and box together, to rejoice with you in the glad tidings of a Saviour born. She has laid them all aside, and clad herself in sackcloth, and put ashes on her head, and soiled her face with weeping, to bring down your pride, chastise your worldliness, and lay you prostrate at His painful Cross. She has arrayed before you, the nuptial party, the baptismal circle, the funereal train. She has besought you by the mercies, she has aroused you by the terrors of the Lord. Has she aroused you to repentance? Has she besought you into holiness?

Have you been won by her, to present yourselves a living sacrifice, acceptable to God? Alas, the unbaptized, who will not wash away their sins; the unconfirmed, who will not seek the Holy Spirit; the non-communicants, who turn their backs upon the table of the Lord; and the communicants who come, but leave their hearts behind; the hearths where there is no family altar; the tables, which no blessing sanctifies; the children, unregenerate, untaught, undisciplined; the grudgings against a neighbour; the grasping after gold; the lustful heart; the envious eye; the slanderous tongue; the worldliness; the selfishness; the uncharitableness; the vindictiveness; the carelessness for man; the thoughtlessness of God: what mournful witness do these bear of impenitence and unbelief. What fearful registry do they lay up against the day of final judgment! My beloved, let it not be so. You have immortal souls. On their condition here, depends their state hereafter. To save them, Jesus died. Look these things fairly in the face. Be not the child, that thinks to shun the thunder-bolt, by winking at the flash. Be not the children whom no song can suit, no melody can charm. Address yourselves like men, to the salvation of your souls. Enquire like men, what God will have you do; and set at once, to do it. Who knows, how long the time shall be? Who knows, how many times the daily bell will call; and you not hear? Who knows, how many times the weekly Eucharist may woo; and you not come? Who knows, how near the Judge is to the door? Oh, for their

mournful case, to whom the Judge shall come; and, yet, their peace not made! Oh, for that mournful question—which, who can answer, and yet who must not?—"how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Oh, for that mournful cry, which through eternity, will still be urged, in unavailing agony; "the harvest is past, the summer is ended; and we are not saved!" O Saviour of the world, who by thy Cross and precious blood hast redeemed us; save us, and help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord.

SERMON XVI.

Advent Season.

THE EXPECTED ONE.

ST. LUKE III. 15-18.—And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not ; John answered, saying unto them all, I, indeed, baptize you with water ; but, one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose : He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire : Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and will gather the wheat into His garner : but the chaff He will burn with fire unquenchable. And many other things, in his exhortation, preached He unto the people.

OUR Lord declared of John the Baptist, that, “ Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater.” The Church distinguishes him, accordingly. He alone is honoured, like the Saviour, by the commemoration of his nativity. And, while the Collect for the Third Sunday in Advent presents Him, specifically, as the pattern for “ the Ministers of Christ ; ” adopting, to that end, the very language of the Epistle for the Day, and the second Lesson contains the text : the Gospel and the second Morning Lesson, for the fourth Sunday in Advent, make him their one engrossing and absorbing theme. Scarcely, the blessed Mother of our Lord is made so prominent.

AN EXPECTED ONE ;
 HIS SURPASSING DIGNITY ;
 THE SPIRITUAL CHARACTER OF HIS RELIGION ;
 ITS FINAL AND IRREVOCABLE ISSUES.

These are the aspects of this solemn Advent season, which the great Forerunner, in the text, presents.

I. *An expected One.* “As the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not.” The promise of “the Christ” was made, to the transgressors, in the garden. At various periods, renewals of it were vouchsafed, to keep the world in heart. The era of His birth was crowded full of prophecies and portents. The rays of prophecy, converging to one point, and, that, so near, arrested every eye. Men stood in silence, with a breathless awe ; as when, in nature, a profounder stillness pains the anxious sense, foretokening an earthquake.

“No war, or battle’s sound,
 Was heard the world around :
 The idle spear and shield were high uphung ;
 The hookéd chariot stood,
 Unstained with hostile blood ;
 The trumpet spake not to the arméd throng :
 And kings sat still, with awful eye,
 As if they surely knew, their Sovereign Lord was by.”

That it was so among the Jews, the elder Scriptures, serving the double part of prophecy and history, suffice to show. While, every scholar knows, that the opinion, that a Jew should have the empire of the world, was

current among the Gentiles. The gates of the Temple of Janus, which had stood open two hundred and thirty-four years, closed, by Augustus, as the mark of universal peace, the very year in which our Lord was born, accorded well with what Isaiah called Him, seven hundred years before, "The Prince of Peace." That such an expectation should tempt the ambition of false Christs, was to be reasonably looked for : and the fact was so. That John the Baptist, strangely born, living a strange life, and claiming, for what he did, authority from Heaven, should be supposed to be the Christ, was only natural. "The people were in expectation," because, by the prophetic reckoning, the times of the Messiah, the Jewish name, for Christ, were, now, at hand. "All men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not," because the holiness with which his life was radiant, was such as they expected, in the Christ.

II. *The surpassing dignity* of the expected One. "And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not ; John answered, saying unto them all, I, indeed, baptize you with water ; but, One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose." From the beginning, He was promised, as the Bruiser of the serpent's head. Of Him, all prophecy bare witness. Him, the nations of the world expected, longed for, pined to see. He came, heralded by angels ; recognized, by pious Jews, as Israel's consolation ; worshipped by Gentile wise men,

as the desire of all the nations. His life, luminous with purity and charity, distinct with miracles, prophetic, while it fulfilled all prophecy, declared Him, sent of God. His death, while it attested His humanity, wrought out, through His mighty resurrection, the demonstration of His divinity. The mystery, which baffles comprehension, the sacred oracles declare: St. Paul, "God was manifest in the flesh:" St. John, "The Word was God;" "and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." Ask not, with Nicodemus, "How can these things be?" You know, that, with the coming of the Messiah, a new day dawned upon the world. You see, that, as its splendours spread, peace, knowledge, freedom, purity, benevolence, whatever makes the present life desirable, or gives assurance of another, is increased and multiplied. In the deep silence of your hearts, you feel, just in proportion as they are yielded to its sway, a peace, which this world cannot give; a joy, in which no stranger intermeddles. Repress not, then, the glow of grateful love, nor let the voice of praise be still, that, on the darkness of the world, that gracious Advent, which the Church, now, celebrates, has shed its cheerful light. If, for the birth of kings, the approach of conquerors, the deeds of human benefactors, anniversaries are kept, triumphal arches reared, and utmost skill and power of man exerted, what shall our hearts not yield, for the redemption of the world; and, with what songs of welcome shall we hail the Incarnate God! He asks no tribute, which the poorest cannot pay. He asks our-

selves; no more. The offering of a broken heart, He never will despise.

III. *The spiritual character of the religion* of the expected One: "I, indeed, baptize you with water;" "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." John was the preacher of repentance. He preached the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins. He pointed to Jesus, as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." What *he* began, Christ carried out, and made complete. Like John, He preached in the wilderness: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." What John did, for a time, in Judea, He made perpetual, throughout the world: "Go ye, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them;" "and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." The sacrifice, which John did but designate, He became: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "I, indeed, baptize you with water," said John the Baptist: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit," Christ said, "he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." The promise of John the Baptist was fulfilled, and the new birth, of water and the Spirit, first, made available, on the day of Pentecost; when "there appeared cloven tongues as of fire, and sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." "Then Peter said unto them, Re-

pent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins : and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” “Then, they that gladly received his word were baptized ; and, the same day, there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” Great and gracious, from that memorable day, have been the manifestations of the Spirit : as boundless, as the benevolence of God ; as numberless, as the necessities of man. The illuminating Spirit : poured down, upon the sacred page ; or, inward, on the opening vision of the soul. The sanctifying Spirit : convincing men of sin ; purifying their hearts, by faith ; and kindling them, with love, as whole burnt-offerings of holiness. The Spirit of grace and consolation : helping men, in their infirmities ; strengthening them, against temptation ; comforting them, in all their tribulation ; enabling them to hazard their lives, unto the death, for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ ; sustaining them, unharmed, through all the blandishments of a seductive world ; and emboldening tender and delicate women, amid the wreck and ruin of the dearest objects of their passionate hearts’ desire, to say, with saintly Paul, “We glory, in tribulations, also.” Does any seek to know the source of all this light, this power, this consolation ? It is from heaven : the gift of the Holy Ghost, poured, in unstinted bounty, on the hearts, which open to receive it. Would any find the channel where it flows ? It is the Church, which is His Body ; who said to the Eleven, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost : whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted ; and

whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Would any know the manner of its operation? As by fire: searching the spirit; separating between the precious and the vile; consuming earthly dross; refining heavenly gold: in one word, making all things new; the new creation of the heart in righteousness and holiness.

IV. And, now, *its final and irrevocable issues*. To try and prove His work, in human hearts, that great expected One will come, again. Fearful, indeed, the Baptist's picture of that day. "Whose fan is in His hand; and He will thoroughly purge His floor; and will gather the wheat into His garner; but the chaff He will burn, with fire unquenchable." Into the kingdom of heaven, "there shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth, or that worketh abomination, or that maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of Life." Fearful, for the strictness of its scrutinies; fearful, for its irreversible results, the trial, which the text describes. "Whose fan is in His hand:" to winnow all the nations; and to sort out every individual soul. "And He shall thoroughly purge His floor." In the vast myriads of the race; innumerable, as the grains, which are piled up, upon the winter threshing-floor, there shall be found two classes; and no more. The wheat, the precious wheat, the harvest of that good seed, which the Saviour sowed, which fell on good ground, which the Spirit watered, and to which the Father gave the increase, shall be gathered into the garner. The chaff—not the vile, only; but

the refuse and worthless—"He will burn, with fire unquenchable."

My brethren, the stern and awful grandeur of that silent multitude, which shall await the sentence of the Judge, tongue cannot tell, nor heart of man take in. No matter what the innumerable number, the dealing is to be with individual hearts. "Every man's work shall be made manifest." "God will judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ;" "who will render to every man, according to his deeds:" "they, that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they, that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Seeing then, dearly beloved, that these things are to be so, "what manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation, and godliness!" If, from the thought, that, as we are to-day, the breath of that unerring fan may pass upon us, we shrink back, appalled; how can we rest, until our peace is made with God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord? Who knows, that all of us shall gather here, again? Who knows, that he shall ever see, again, that heavenly feast, which Jesus spreads, to-day? Nay, who can tell, that, before the hour, which calls us here, again, the sentence that can never be reversed, will not have passed on some of us? His "fan is in his hand." Upon the dead, no change can come. And what divides, between the living, and the dead? A breath. One breath. Only, one breath. And what divides between the chaff and the wheat; between the righteous, and the wicked; between them, that shall go away into everlasting punishment, and

them, that shall enter into life eternal? A breath.
One breath. Only, one breath.

“That breath is Thine, eternal God ;
Tis Thine, to fix the soul’s abode :
It holds its life from Thee, alone,
On earth, or in the world unknown.

To Thee, our spirits we resign ;
Make them, and own them, still, as Thine ;
So shall they live, serene from fear,
Though death shall blast the rising year.”

SERMON XVII

Advent Season.

AN ACCEPTABLE PEOPLE

ST. LUKE I. 17.—A people prepared for the Lord.

It was the mission of John the Baptist, as the angel Gabriel states it, “to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” The Church, to-day, declares the same to be the office of the Christian ministry: “grant that the ministers and stewards of Thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready Thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that, at Thy second coming to judge the world, we may be found an acceptable people in Thy sight.” The matter is thus brought strongly home, for our consideration.

“A PEOPLE PREPARED FOR THE LORD.”

WHO ARE NOT SUCH?

HOW MAY WE BECOME SUCH?

WHEN SHALL WE KNOW THAT WE ARE SUCH?

I. i. “A people prepared for the Lord.” They are not such, who are living in their sins. This is not said, as if you did not know it. A child might say it. All men own it. And, yet, what multitudes go on, in sin!

It is the strangest problem, which the world has ever witnessed; that men who know what sin is, and has cost, and, through eternity, must cost the soul that lives in it, should still go on in sin. It is the old delusion, repeated every day, "Ye shall not surely die!" At first, it is the prompting of their evil nature. Anon, it is the inbred yoke of habit. At last, it has become almost a stern necessity. In the strong language of the Apostle: "they cannot cease from sin!" But, sin is darkness. God is light. Sin is hatred. God is love. Sin is death. God, life. They cannot dwell together. "What fellowship hath righteousness, with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?" "Your sins have separated between you and your God." Deliberate sin is virtual Atheism. It were as true to say, there is no God, as a God who will not punish sin. But it is self-punished. Punished in the loss of moral freedom to the soul, which cannot do the things it would, nor cease from those it would not do; punished in the loathing of itself, which has no respite, but in that which is far worse, in being "past feeling," so as "to work all uncleanness with greediness;" punished in the sense of loneliness, and desperation: as being without God in the world, and therefore without hope; which for repentance feeds remorse, and gnaws the heart in self-revenge.

ii. "A people prepared for the Lord." They are not such who live to the world. "The world is too much with us." We come to think it necessary. We make ourselves a part of it. But this is foolish, in the

first place ; and, then, wrong. Foolish ; because “ the world passeth away, and the lust thereof : ” while the soul is to endure forever. Surely there cannot be a greater folly, than for the immortal to identify the mortal with itself ; for that which cannot cease to be, to make the perishable necessary to its being. But it is chiefly foolish to live to the world, because it is wrong. God is the end, as He is the Author, of our being. We are to have no other Gods but Him. We are to desire nothing in comparison with him. Surely, not the world then ; which is opposed to Him ; which crucified His only Son ; which still arrays itself against Him ; and which, if it be not crucified upon His Cross, will crucify Him afresh, and put Him to an open shame. “ Love not the world,” says the Apostle and Evangelist St. John, “ neither the things that are in the world ; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world.” And, again, St. Paul writes to the Roman Christians, “ be not conformed to this world ; but be ye transformed, by the renewing of your minds.” So far from being worldly, or world-like, they must be godlike, or godly. And between these two, the difference is so great, as to be called, a transformation ; and, sometimes, a new creation. That, as man, at his first creation, was made like God, and all but lost His image, in the Fall ; so now he must be new created. Old things must pass away. Behold, all things must become new. A new pattern, a new principle, new motives, new desires, new practices ; in

short, a new creation : that that which heretofore was dead in sin, may be henceforth "alive to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord ;" "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service."

iii. "A people prepared for the Lord." They are not such, who live for themselves. St. Paul is bold to say, that no man liveth, or can live, to himself; and no man dieth to himself. And this is literally true. The human, is a social, nature. The race is interknit together; as, in a web, where, one stitch broken, all will be unravelled. There can be no isolation in humanity. We cannot live among our fellows; and not influence them, for good or evil. And if we cease to live among them, then our loss of influence is negatively influential. Philosophers assert of matter, that no particle, which ever was, can ever cease to be. It may be changed, and changed, and changed again, but cannot be destroyed. Infinitely more so, the immortal moral agents, which we speak of now, as men. Each, has his place. Each has his sphere of duty. Each, his trust; for which he is responsible. None of us liveth to himself. We must not, if we could. We ought to be god-like. We must be, if we would be His. But God is love. And darkness is less the opposite of light, than self, of love. Again, when He came who was to be our pattern, that our steps might tread in His, and follow Him, through earth to heaven, He came, the incarnation of true love; and so, the utter sacrifice of self. He gave Himself for us. He was cut off, but not for Himself. He was made sin; that is, an offering, for sin, for

us. And that great master of morality, St. Paul, sums it all up, in his Epistle to the Philippians: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." This is He who is set forth, to be the mould and pattern of our new creation. Surely, in their hearts, who have been signed with such a Cross, there can be no place left for self. Surely it need not now be said of them who live unto themselves, they are not a people prepared for the Lord.

II. We hasten, then, to the great question, how we may become such. And the context furnishes the answer. It is the Angel's declaration, as to the character of St. John the Baptist. "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before Him, in the spirit and power of Elias; to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children; and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." In whatever way the Mission of the Baptist was fulfilled,

we are to be made ready, as the people of his time were, a people prepared for the Lord.

i. The deserts of Judea, in the days of Herod, Pilate, and Tiberius, became the scene of a new spectacle; as wonderful, as new. Through their waste places, a voice was heard, which stirred the hearts of all who heard it, like a trumpet-blast. It came from one, of whom the world made no account. A rough, plain man, clad in a coat of camel's hair, a leathern girdle round his loins, his food the rudest that boon nature offered to the rovers of the wilderness, confounded all the wise, disturbed the courts of kings, and drew the nation to his preaching; though it cut them to the heart. At the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, whole multitudes came forth. He preached the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins; and they, repenting, were baptized. Nor did he leave them, in the uncompromising plainness of his stern rebukes, to the delusion of a lip-repentance. He told them what they were. He told them what their danger was. He told them how alone they could escape it. "O generation of vipers, he said," to men and women, such as you are, "who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits worthy of repentance." He specified distinctly what he meant. When some inquired of Him, what they should do, he told them plainly, they must crucify and kill the principle of self: "he that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise."

He came not as a revolutionist ; to overthrow the governments or institutions of the world. He came not as a fanatic ; to change the order of society, and draw men from the state of life, where God had set them. He enjoined, on all, contentment with their station, faithfulness in the discharge of every duty, charity to every other. To the Publicans, he said, though they were tax-gatherers for such a tyrant as Tiberius, "Exact no more than that which is appointed you." And to the Soldiers, though the eagle of the empire was the banner of their universal conquest, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages." In one word, he made ready a people prepared for the Lord, by the preaching of repentance.

ii. But this was not his only lesson. He came, the forerunner of Him who was called Jesus, because He was to save His people from their sins. He pointed to the Cross, as the atonement to be made for sin. He said, of Him, who was to suffer on it, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." He said, to all who came, to be baptized of him ; "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." In one more word, he made ready a people prepared for the Lord, by preaching faith in Jesus Christ, as the one Mediator, by whom man can come to God.

And the lesson and the preparation must forever be the same. Repent ye, and believe the Gospel, was

the constant exhortation of the Saviour, when He went about, to teach and preach. And the Apostle Paul, go where he might, testified both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. To the Corinthians, he declared that he was determined to know nothing among them but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And, to the Galatians, that while he gloried—God forbid, that he should think of any other!—only in the Cross, he gloried in that only, as it crucified the world to him, and him unto the world.

III. And this is the answer to that other question which the text suggests. How shall we know that we are, in any sort, a people prepared for the Lord? Not by the fancy, that we are. Not by the feeling, that we desire to be. But, as St. Paul, by deadness unto sin, by deadness unto the world, by deadness unto self; in one word, by the crucifixion, ever more and more, of sin, the world and self, upon the Cross, with Jesus Christ. By the faith, that is to say, which works by love, and overcomes the world.

“Vain are our fancies, vain our flights,
If faith be cold and dead :
None, but a living faith, unites
To Christ, the living Head.
The faith which new creates the heart,
And works by active love,
Will bid all sinful joys depart,
And lift the thoughts above.”

Men speak of the witness of the Spirit, in a way that brings contempt upon the Cross, and hinders multitudes from coming to it. For who, in common life, accepts a man's assurance, that he is honest, or innocent of such or such a crime, or capable of such or such a trust? What man, with common sense, will take the confidence of forgiveness for forgiveness; or the feeling of acceptance with the Holiest to be acceptance? Not such the teachings of the Scriptures. Not such the mark of them who are prepared for the Lord. "By their fruits," says Jesus, "ye shall know them." By your fruits, dear brethren, know yourselves. "Now the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Not one of these a fancy. Not one of these, a feeling, merely. But all plain, positive, palpable realities. Things, that are; not things, that are to be. Not buds, not leaves, not flowers; but branches, living branches, branches of a tree with roots, and bearing fruit. They that are Christ's, have crucified, are daily crucifying, the flesh, with its affections and lusts. This is the testimony, by which the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; a people prepared for the Lord. Then it is, when we are daily making progress against sin; when we are daily living more and more, as weanlings from the world; when we are daily gaining more and more the conquest of ourselves, in self-denial, self-abasement, self-control, self-sacrifice; when we seek more and more to know, that we may do, the will of God; when we take more and more enjoyment in

the study of His holy Word ; when we delight more and more in the service of His Sanctuary ; when we are instant more and more in fervent prayer ; when we embrace with more and more of grateful love, the bread and wine which nourish to immortal life, and feel that we are made by them, to cling more closely to the Cross of Jesus Christ, as our sole help, sole glory and sole hope : then it is that we may know and be assured, however sorely straitened in the conflict, that through the grace of Christ, we are more and more a people prepared for the Lord. Was it not so with Simeon, just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, whom God permitted to embrace the infant Christ ? Was it not so with aged Anna, who scarce departed from the Temple, but served God night and day, with prayers and fastings, who found favour with the Lord ; and, at that instant, coming in, gave thanks for the redemption that was then revealed ? Was it not in the breaking of bread, that He was known to the two, that walked to Emmaus ? And was it not when they were all with one accord in prayer and supplication, that the Spirit was poured down on the disciples ? It will be ever so. To them that come to Him, the Saviour comes. They who so make these Advents, which are shadows of His judgment, times of preparation, by His word and in His Church, shall be to Him, through grace, a people well prepared. To them who love Him, and who look for His appearing, it shall be with joy, and not with grief, their Saviour, though their Judge.

SERMON XVIII.

Christmas Day.

THE MANGER-CRADLED CHILD.

ISAIAH IX. 6.—“Unto us, a child is born.”

ALL Christendom, to-day, is gathered at the cradle of a child : a manger, for a cradle.

i. *A child of Obscurity.* The least considered of all that multitude, which, at the will of Cæsar, went to Bethlehem, to be registered ; when the most blessed Mary was to lay her holy burden down, she laid it in a manger : because the inn was full.

ii. *A child of Poverty.* When the Virgin Mother presented Him for redemption in the Temple, and made her offering of purification, she brought the pair of turtle-doves, which were permitted to the poorest of the mothers of the people.

iii. *A child of Persecution.* His life pursued so fiercely, by the King, before He yet was two years old, that all the children, of His age, and under, in Bethlehem, and in the coasts thereof, were slain ; in the mad hope of His destruction.

Yet, at the manger-cradle of this child of obscurity and poverty and persecution, the world bends low, to-day. For more than eighteen hundred years, the birth at Bethlehem, has given the date to its chronology. And temples, trophies, triumphs, more in number, and of greater splendour, than all other names have ever won, have signalized that manger-cradled child.

I. What shall account for these most singular results? What can the explanation be, of this most wonderful phenomenon? He was *the child of promise*. Upon the very foremost page of Holy Scripture, it is written, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed; It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel."

II. He was *the child of Prophecy*. "For unto us," Isaiah said, more than seven hundred years before, "unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

III. He was *the child of God*. To the blessed Virgin, who was to be His mother, Gabriel said, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore, also, that Holy Thing, which shall be *born of thee*, shall be called, The Son of God."

IV. Need it be added, *He was God?* So named, beforehand, by Isaiah, and the record made, after seven centuries, and more, by Matthew: "They shall call His name Emmanuel; which, being interpreted, is, God with us."

Is the conclusion large? Do you stagger at so strange a contrast? Do you hesitate in your assent? Follow, a moment, but a handful of the lines of light, which all converge upon that wondrous birth. Into the garden of primæval bliss, Satan found entrance, as a serpent. The woman, tempted, fell. The race was lost. To the Destroyer, God declared, her Seed shall bruise thy head. In that poor shed, a manger-cradle holds the woman's Seed, the Virgin-born.

The home of Mary was at Nazareth. It was a time for poverty to be at home. But Micah had declared, seven hundred years before, "thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet, out of thee, shall He come forth, unto Me, that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." Augustus Cæsar decrees a census of his empire. People must be registered, in places whence they sprung. And Mary, however poor, a daughter of the house of David, goes up to Bethlehem, which was the town of David; and fulfils the prophecy.

Shepherds, that night, are in the field, watching their flocks. The glory of the Lord encompasses them. An angel comes from heaven, to speak to them. He brings glad tidings of great joy, for all mankind: "Un-

to you is born, this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." The sign shall be an infant, cradled in a manger. And, then, that outburst of the glorious company of heaven: "Glory to God in the highest: and on earth, peace; good will to men."

"The helmed Cherubim,
And sworded Seraphim,
Are seen, in glittering ranks, with wings displayed;
Harping in loud and solemn choir,
With unexpressive notes, to Heaven's new-born Heir."

And, then that simple record of the fact: "they came, with haste, and found Mary and Joseph; and the Babe lying in a manger."

Wise men, in the far East, keep watch, upon the stars. They strive to read, in them, the fate of empires and the destinies of men. They had heard of Balaam's vision: "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall arise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." They had mixed it up, as we conclude, from the account of a prevailing expectation, at that time, which Tacitus records, with Jacob's dying declaration: "the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him, shall the gathering of the people be." Just then, an unaccustomed star crosses their field of vision. It arrests their notice. Its motions are as extraordinary as its appearance. They watch it. It moves. They follow it. It goes before them. It leads them to Judea. It leads them to Jerusalem. It leads them to Bethlehem:

Micah's prophetic chart confirming its direction. It leads them to the very house, where the young Child, with Mary, His Mother, is. If they open their treasures, and present unto Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh, it is not more their grateful adoration of Him whom they had come to worship, than the fulfilment of what David and Isaiah had declared: "the kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents, the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts;" "they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord;" "and the Gentiles shall come to Thy light, and kings to the brightness of Thy rising."

We come not idly then, to-day, to Bethlehem's sacred street. Primæval promise, the converging rays of prophecy, the records of all history, conspire to mark it, as the radiant centre of the world. Nor, do we bend before it, with a common crowd. Glorious angels, simple shepherds, holy saints,

"The masters of the starry lore,
From Ophir's shore of gold,"

"the goodly fellowship of the Prophets," "the glorious company of the Apostles," "the noble army of Martyrs," have all been there, before us. "The holy Church, throughout all the world," there worships, with us now. The conquered world, the conquest of that Cross, which it set up to crucify its God, and forced to own, with Julian, "Galilean, Thou hast conquered," bends, if it does not worship, there. And, from that wondrous night, the light has sprung, before which, one

by one, the old, miscalled religions have died out ; whose genial ray is felt on all the paths of life, and even in the precincts of the grave ; and which is to shine, until it fill the world with glory, and bring God from heaven again, to dwell with men.

1. *What a lesson of the sinfulness of sin !* That it should bring the Son of God from heaven. Bring Him, in the form of a suffering man. Bring Him, to the manger of the stable of an inn. Bring Him, to the bleeding Cross. Has it brought us to crucify the sins, by which the Lord was crucified ? Have we, for His sake, who gave up all for us, given up ourselves, in holiness, to Him ? If it be not so, what a mockery, the form, which celebrates the day of His nativity ! To call Him Lord ; and yet reject His laws. To bring Him a sacrifice ; but one that has no heart.

2. *What a lesson of the love of God !* What else, but love, could brook such painful condescension ! What, but the love of God, could make such sacrifice ; and that for sinners ! Has it moved your hearts to answering love ? Has it melted them in sympathy ? Has it poured them out, in gratitude ? If not, feel of them, if they be not stone. And tremble for the fierceness of that flame, in which the stones shall melt.

3. *What a lesson of contented thankfulness with our condition !* When Jesus Christ came down from heaven, He came not to a throne, nor to a court, nor to the ease and elegance of private life : but to the cot of a poor carpenter ; and to work with him, at his trade. When He might have spoken to His Father, and had beside

Him, in a moment, more than twelve legions of angels, He chose, for His companions, twelve poor fishermen. And, when He hungered, instead of calling to His aid the stores of heaven, He partook with them of their plain fare. "Children, have ye any meat? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of a honey-comb." How it should check in us that cursed love of gain, which still, by any means, adds house to house, and field to field; as if the life consisted in the abundance of the things which it possessed. How should it teach the rich, humility, and hush the murmurings of the poor! How should it turn all hearts to that one needful thing: and win us all to choose, with Mary, that good part which never should be taken from us!

4. *What a lesson of peacefulness, in thought, and word, and deed!* The proclamation, which announced His coming, was "peace on earth!" He was so tender-hearted, that He would not even break a bruised reed. He was so gentle, and so kind, that little children flocked to Him, and loved to be with Him. Nay, when He hung upon the Cross, and traitorous Jews and murderous Romans jeered Him, in His anguish, His only answer was, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Oh, how the heart-burnings and bitter words and over-reachings and strivings unto blood, even, of Christian men, contrast themselves with His deportment, in whose Name they make their boast! What have hard thoughts, hard words, hard deeds, to do, with Him, whose Name is Love? How should His patient meekness, even, with the chief of sinners, put to

shame, the impatience, the censoriousness, the malice, the revenge, the cruelty, the violence, the blows, the blood, the war, which cry to heaven; and give us here a foretaste of the wretchedness of hell!

5. *What a lesson of unfailing charity!* “Who gave Himself for us.” What could He, more? “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” If it were so, what a change, in all the world! What hearths, now cold, would soon be all ablaze! What children, that now cry for hunger, would go cheerfully, to-night, to bed! What sick would then be visited! What mourners comforted! What ignorant instructed! What captives set at liberty! What heathen told of Christ! What souls converted! And what sinners saved! How would the rugged paths of earth be smoothed; and sunshine fall on many a shady place! How calm, and quiet, then, would be the flow of life! And death, the tranquil blending of the soul with the great ocean of its being. “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him!”

Let no one say, these are poetic dreams, impossible to man. It is the lesson of this joyful season, that all men may be saved. He came to us, that we might go to Him. Hear what the angel said, to the poor shepherds: “Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For, unto you, is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” Then, hear what they said, one to another: “Let us, now, go, even unto Bethlehem, and see the thing which is come to pass; which the

Lord hath made known to us." This was true faith. They did not doubt. They did not wait. They went. Beloved brethren, be such your faith, to-day. The Lord makes known to you His great salvation; His Son, made flesh for us. He is preached to you, in the Gospel. He is witnessed of, by the Church. Nay, He is set forth, visibly crucified, before you, here, this day. Believe it, on the word of an Apostle. Nay, believe it, on the very word of Jesus Christ: "Take, eat, this is my body; drink ye all of this, for this is my blood; he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him." Receive, in penitential faith, the living Saviour, to your loving hearts. Then, will it be a Christmas Day, indeed: a true feast of the true nativity: "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

And, underneath these hallowed eaves,
A Saviour will be born,
In every heart, that Him receives,
On His triumphal morn."

SERMON XIX.

Christmas Day.

G O O D - T I D I N G S .

ST. LUKE II. 8-11.—And there were, in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch, over their flock, by night. And, lo, the Angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the Angel said unto them, Fear not : for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, For unto you is born, this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ, the Lord.

ST. LUKE II. 13, 14.—And, suddenly, there was, with the Angel, a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest ; and, on earth, peace ; good will toward men.

ISAIAH IX. 6.—For, unto us, a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder ; and His name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

You have heard these words, in the two Lessons, for this morning's service. And you have listened to a part of them, as they are wedded to immortal music, in Handel's magnificent "Messiah." Were such words ever uttered ? Words of such exquisite tenderness ? Words of such glorious beauty ? Words of such transcendent sublimity ?

Words of such exquisite tenderness. "And there were, in the same country, shepherds, abiding, in the

field, keeping watch, over their flock, by night." What an opening, for a drama, which takes in heaven and earth, and comprehends eternity, with time! The simple shepherds. Their simpler sheep. The burning stars. The air sparkling with frost. The distant baying of the wolves. Their conversation of the promises of the Messiah, and of the portents, on the earth, and in the heaven, which seem to hasten on His coming. Oh, that, in their time, it might be! Oh, that their eyes might "see the King, in His glory!" "And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid." The very thing they wished for, when it comes, appals them. As the naked eye blenches before the blaze of noon. As the miraculous draught of fishes frightened the Apostles. As the desire of the heart, when it is granted to us, is sometimes more than we can bear. "And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For, unto you, is born, this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Beautiful condescension of the Godhead.

"What kings, and prophets longed to see,
And died without the sight,"

revealed to poor Judean shepherds; and the chiefest angel of His presence, its messenger to them. "Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool." "For all these things, hath mine hand made:" "but, to this man will I look, even to

him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."

"The pastoral spirits, first,
Approach Thee, Babe divine;
For they, in lowly thoughts are nursed,
Meet for Thy lowly shrine.

Sooner than they shall miss, where Thou dost dwell,
Angels, from heaven, will stoop, to guide them to Thy cell."

And then, *what words of glorious beauty!* "And, suddenly, there was, with the angel, a multitude of the Heavenly Host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest: and, on earth, peace; good will, toward men." "This, then," says one, "was the first Christmas Carol: where angels were the choristers; and salvation was the theme; and Heaven and earth bowed down, to listen. What a jubilant Hymn, must this have been, on the redemption of the whole human race, if one sinner's repentance can fill the courts of heaven with joy! A single glorious Angel having communicated the joyous tidings—and, so, in a measure prepared the mind of these simple swains, for what might follow—"a multitude of the heavenly host" are suddenly revealed to their wondering sight: and the heavenly strain, which follows, breaks on their ravished ears. It was the birthday of the New Creation. A new cornerstone was laid. Well, therefore, may the morning stars have sung together; and all the sons of God have shouted for joy!"

And now Isaiah ends the record with *words transcendent in sublimity*. "Unto us a child is born." The

household joy which wakes by some glad hearth, with every day. "Unto us a Son is given." The answer, to so many prayers, so many tears. "And the government" of the whole Universe, "shall be upon His shoulder;" unto whom "all power is given," "both in heaven and earth." "And His name shall be called"—which, in the Hebrew idiom, means that He shall *be*—"wonderful;" "wonderful" in His mysterious Incarnation, the Word made flesh; "wonderful" in His miraculous conception, "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God:" and "wonderful" in His immaculate birth of a pure and unapproached Virgin; "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." "His name shall be called"—in the true meaning, He shall be,—"*Counsellor*:" "*Counsellor*" with the Father in the work of the Creation; so that "all things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made;" "*Counsellor*" with the Father in the work of our redemption, so that in their divine and gracious counsels, the Lamb was "slain from the foundation of the world:" "*Counsellor*" with the Father, in the work of our sanctification, so that when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, that the Lord God might dwell among them. And "His name shall be called"—in the true meaning of the words—He is "the mighty God," underived, essential, and Almighty, "the King of

kings and Lord of lords." His name shall be called—in the true sense, He is—"the everlasting Father;" so that "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;" so that He said, when in the flesh, "Before Abraham was, I Am;" so that we His ministers may say, as Moses said, "I Am hath sent me," the everlasting Father, the Jehovah, who was, and is, and is to be. And finally His name shall be called—in the true sense, He shall be—"the Prince of Peace:" from the beginning, He was the self-devoted Peacemaker, that should restore the fallen children to the righteous Father; at His birth, the blessed burden of the angelic song was, peace on earth; upon the Cross, in His own blood, He made peace for us; His reign on earth is the reign of peace and love; and in the highest heaven, He shall fill all saints, through everlasting ages, with His peace.

"All glory be to God on high
And to the earth be peace;
Good will, henceforth, from heaven to men,
Begin and never cease.

"Like circles widening round
Upon a clear blue river,
Orb after orb, the wondrous sound
Is echoed on forever,
Glory to God on high, on earth be peace,
And love towards men of love, salvation and release."

Said I not well, beloved, that such words, as those which I have read to you to-day, were never uttered? Words of such exquisite tenderness? Words of such

glorious beauty? Words of such transcendent sublimity? And all so wonderfully realized, in the issues of that night of nights which ushered in this day.

“It was the calm and silent night!

Seven hundred years and fifty-three
Had Rome been growing up to might,
And now was queen of land and sea.
No sound was heard of clashing wars,
Peace brooded o’er the hushed domain:
Apollo, Pallas, Jove, and Mars
Held undisturbed their ancient reign,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago.

“’Twas in the calm and silent night!

The senator of haughty Rome,
Impatient, urged his chariot’s flight,
From lordly revel rolling home;
Triumphal arches, gleaming, swell
His breast with thoughts of boundless sway;
What reeked the Roman what befell
A paltry province far away,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago?

“Within that province far away,

Went plodding home a weary boor;
A streak of light before him lay,
Fallen through a half-shut stable-door
Across his path. He passed—for naught
Told what was going on within;
How keen the stars, his only thought;
The air, how calm, and cold, and thin,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago!

"O, strange indifference ! low and high
 Drowsed over common joys and cares ;
 The earth was still—but knew not why ;
 The world was listening, unawares.
 How calm a moment may precede
 One that shall thrill the world forever !
 To that still moment, none would heed,
 Man's doom was linked no more to sever,
 In the solemn midnight,
 Centuries ago !

"It is the calm and solemn night !
 A thousand bells ring out, and throw
 Their joyous peals abroad, and smite
 The darkness—charmed and holy now !
 The night that erst, no name had borne,
 To it a happy name is given ;
 For in that stable lay, new-born,
 The peaceful Prince of earth and heaven,
 In the solemn midnight,
 Centuries ago ! "

Upon the hallowed subject of this day, the birth of our dear Lord, made flesh to save us from our sins, ages have lavished all their choicest stores of art, in painting and sculpture and poetry and music. And angels, we may well believe, have looked with sacred joy upon the work. But, my beloved, though these all are due to this great mercy, as the trophies of a rescued world, they are not that which wins acceptance from the Lord, or brings salvation to the soul. In vain, the canvas gleams ; in vain the marble breathes ; in vain the poet breathes his burning words, and music swells its loftiest, sighs its tenderest strains, unless the heart

be given to God, in faith and penitence and love. And so the honest Church, in her inimitable collect, teaches us to-day. In vain the Only-begotten took our nature on Him. In vain the Virgin undefiled lays down her holy burden, in the manger at Bethlehem. Nay, vainly, at that perennial font, which flows forever with the cleansing and regenerating blood of Jesus, were we made God's children by adopting grace, unless we daily are renewed in heart and life, by the Divine and Holy Spirit. In daily penitence, we must confess our daily sins. In daily acts of faith, we must renew our self-devotion to Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins. In daily thoughts and words and acts of love, we must make real in our hearts and lives, that life of God, which only can have immortality. The Cross that saves must crucify the heart. The brooding Dove, to be the Comforter, must also be the Sanctifier of our souls.

S E R M O N X X .

Christmas-tide.

THE HOLY CHILD OF NAZARETH.

ST. LUKE II. 51.—And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them.

THIS is the children's season ; from Christmas, to Septuagesima. It is the season of the childhood of Jesus. I intend to speak, to-day, of children. It is a subject, chosen, for me, by the Church. And, with what deep, wide, wisdom ! For, there are children, everywhere. And, as the children are, the world will be.

The Word, made flesh, took on Himself, excepting sin, all accidents of human nature. He was conceived and born ; though, in a strange way, of a Virgin ; as Isaiah said, so many centuries, before. He was an infant. He was a child. He was a boy. He was a youth. He was a man. He consecrated every stage and phase of our humanity ; that these might all be consecrated unto Him. Of this great thought, the Church makes faithful use. She leaves out nothing, of

His story, from her year. She takes us, to the manger, at the Christmas feast; that we may realize, and, so, adore, the wondrous mystery of His humanity: "Emmanuel;" "God, with us." She sets, next, after this, the feast-days of St. Stephen, St. John the Evangelist, and the Holy Innocents; that we may see what company the Saviour loves to keep: the little children, the man of loves, the martyr deacon. She marks the day of His admission to the ancient rite, by which, Jehovah sealed His covenant of mercy with His chosen people; that we may feel, how, through the Fall, all things were stained with blood: and bring our little ones, without delay, to that benignant sacrament, which is, to them, the sprinkling of that blood, without which, there is no remission. She takes us to the Temple, on the day of His presenting, that we may worship there, with aged Simeon, and widowed Anna; and give thanks, unto the Lord, with all, who 'looked for redemption, in Jerusalem.'" She guides us, by the leading of a star, to that low cot, in Bethlehem, that, with the Gentile wise men, we may worship, at His feet; and pour our best, before Him. But, these are public, all: acts of high worship; solemn offices of duty and devotion; the service of a nation; the prostration of the world. The inner sanctities of life must, also, be made holier, by His participation of them. The charities of the domestic scene must share the benediction of His presence. He must grace and bless, with His serene and holy smile, the lowly couch, the simple board, the sacred hearth of home. And, that no year may come and go,

to household hearts, without it, and that divinest picture of the Holy Family diffuse an annual charm, on every Christian house,—since, it so happens, that in some years, as in this, there comes but one of the Sundays called, “after Epiphany,”—that portion of the record of Luke, which he has touched, with happiest pencil, and imbued with the most golden light, must be the Gospel for that day : the Gospel of the little children.

“Now, His parents went, every year, to Jerusalem, at the feast of the Passover.” Joseph, because he must ; since it was so required of every male. Mary, because she might ; to bear him company, and to be present, at the feast. And, so it is, with pious souls. They love the gates of Zion. A day, in His courts, is “better than a thousand.” It is their constant thought : “blessed are they who dwell in Thy house ; they will be always praising Thee.” There is no surer test, of a heart, renewed to God. It will ever say, “I was glad, when they said, unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.” Not glad to go there, just for what it sees. Not glad to go there, just for what it hears. But, because He is there, as children love their Father’s home. And there is nothing like it, upon earth. It is our only refuge, from the world. It is the only place, where all is peace. It is the only house, which stands upon the Rock. It is the place where God is ; and the gate, into His heaven. The heart, that loves it, will be hearty in its love. It will be zealous, for its honour. It will be generous in its maintenance. It will be fervent in all its services. It will walk in all its ordi-

nances. As David said: "Blessed is the man, whom Thou choosest and receivest unto Thee; he shall dwell in Thy courts, and be satisfied with the pleasures of Thy house, even of Thy holy temple." And, again, "How excellent is Thy mercy, O God; and the children of men shall put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. They shall be satisfied, with the plenteousness of Thy house; and Thou shalt give them drink, of Thy pleasures, as out of the river."

"And, when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem, after the custom of the feast." How beautiful an age, to be found foremost, in the throngs, that press toward the house of God! How beautiful an age, to be found mingling, with heart and voice, in the devotions of the Temple. It is about the age, at which the Church expects her children to come forward, and renew their vows of baptism; and from the laying on of hands, go to the Christian Passover. Well, were it, if our Pastors more required, our parents more encouraged, this early dedication of our children. Well, in its early rescue of them, from the world. Well, in its early consecration of them, to the service of the Lord. Well, in its early use, by them, of the appointed means of grace. Surely, this careful mention of the Saviour's age was not without design. Surely, it should not be without impressiveness, to those whom God has spared, through all the ills of infancy, and all the risks of childhood.

"And, when they had fulfilled the days, the child Jesus tarried behind, in Jerusalem: and Joseph and

His mother knew not of it. But, they, supposing Him to have been in the company, went a day's journey : and they sought Him, among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And, when they found Him not, they turned back again, to Jerusalem, seeking Him." The feast continued, for seven days. In going and coming it was the custom of the Jews, we are told by Venerable Bede, "for the men and women to go, separately ; and the infants or children, to go with either parent, indiscriminately. And, so, both Mary and Joseph might easily think that the child was with the other." As soon as He was missed, when, at the close of the first day, the households gathered, for refreshment, for devotion, and for rest, they sought Him, as was natural, "among His kinsfolk and acquaintance ;" and, then, set out, with heavy hearts, to seek Him, at Jerusalem.

"And it came to pass, that after three days, they found Him, in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And they, that heard Him, were astonished at His understanding and His answers." It is written, in another place ; "and the Child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom : and the grace of God was upon Him." And, now, we see it, in His conduct. His seeking to the Temple : though it bore Him, for a season, from His mother. His occupation there : inquiring of the teachers of the Law, and listening to their answers. His proficiency in sacred knowledge : so, that, all who heard Him, were astonished, at His understanding. It is a beautiful thought, of Bishop

Taylor's, that the parents, in their sorrow at not finding their lost child, went to the Temple, to pour out their souls, in prayer; and found there, what they went, to pray for. Found Him, indeed, where all may always find Him, in His House of Prayer. And found Him, in such fitting occupation. As a child, in meekness, inquiring of the doctors; while His questions, through the wisdom, which ran over, in Him, were lessons to His teachers.

“And, when they saw Him, they were amazed: and His mother said unto Him, Son, why hast Thou thus, dealt with us? Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing. And He said unto them, How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not, that I must be about My Father's business?” Strange, as the spectacle must seem, the child, of twelve years old, at home, among the doctors of the Law, they hanging on His answers, and astonished at His understanding, the Mother's heart breaks out; and will be heard: “Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee, sorrowing.” And, then, He turned and said; in calm serenity and consciousness of Godhead, “How is it that ye sought Me,” Mother? “How is it, that ye sought Me,” among kinsfolk and acquaintance; as if ties of flesh were all, or chief? How is it, that ye did not seek me here, in My true home, My Father's house? Did ye not know wherefore I came; and, that it becomes Me to be “about my Father's business?” Beautiful lesson, of the childhood of the Son of God! But once, presented,

to us, in the Gospel ; and, then, presented in the Temple. But, once, the source of sorrow to the holy heart, on which, His infancy was nursed ; and, then, for being about His Father's business. Where are the earnest looks and listful ears of little children so attractive, as in the House of God ? And what so comforting, to the parental heart, as children, that delight to tread its courts !

“And they understood not the saying which He spake unto them. And He went down, with them, and came to Nazareth ; and was subject unto them. But His mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature ; and in favour with God and man.” How beautiful, the contrast, in these verses ! “They understood not the saying which He spake unto them.” “Who *can*, by searching, find out God ?” And yet, “He went down, with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them.” There is nothing upon record, that so sets forth the greatness of humility. Nor can there be, of true obedience, a more vivid picture. He was, in the beginning, with God, and was God ; and, by Him, all things were made. And, yet, having taken flesh upon Him, that He might so redeem us by His death and teach us by His life, He set the perfect pattern of submission. He went down with them, and came to Nazareth ; and was subject unto them. There were never any other parents, that were not greater than their child : greater, in age ; greater, in strength ; greater, in wisdom ; greater, in knowledge. He was from eternity. He was Almighty.

He was all-wise. He was all-knowing. And, yet, "He was subject unto them." What a reproof of the impatient petulance of children. What a rebuke of their habitual tendency, to think more highly of themselves, than of their parents. What a pattern, for an unfilial age. He "was subject unto them." I would that all the children, here, would lay it to their hearts. I would that they would snatch, while yet they may, a transcript from this picture. I would that they would see, how, better than all ornaments, and fairer than all beauty, is an obedient, gentle, meek, submissive childhood.

"So, should our sons, as saplings, grow,
In youth's gay hour of bloom ;
As pillar'd shafts, our daughters show,
In modell'd arch or dome."

It is beautifully said, in this connection: "His mother kept all these sayings in her heart." Most wonderful relation, the Mother of the Son of God! The disciple of her own Child; while she received, from Him, perfect obedience: storing up His words, and reflecting upon them; desirous to know, and coming, by degrees, to understand their fulness. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature; and, in favour with God and man."

The Holy Scripture, now before us, is the picture of a happy family. They may be poor. As Mary and her husband were. When she presented offerings, at her purifying, she brought the cheaper gift, the pair of turtle-doves, permitted to a poor man's wife. They may

be in humble life. Joseph was a carpenter. And Jesus laboured, with him, at his trade. But, they must be religious. They must fear God, and keep His commandments. They must reverence His sanctuary ; and walk in all His ordinances. Joseph and Mary went up to Jerusalem. Not he, alone ; but she, with him : at double cost, out of their narrow means. They did so, from religious principle. He was "a just man." She, a meek, believing, thoughtful, woman. Upon a course, like theirs, of constant and consistent piety, the blessing from the Lord descends, in countless ways. It comes, direct, in keeping them from harm ; and prospering them, in what they undertake. It comes, in softened tempers ; in subdued desires ; in sanctified affections ; in a holy will ; in patience, to endure ; in firmness, to resist ; in confidence, to undertake ; in cheerfulness, to persevere ; in one word, in a heart, renewed, and sanctified, by grace. It comes, in favour, even, from a wicked world ; in confidence, from those, who have no confidence in one another ; in that unbidden and unbought respect, which is the poor man's true nobility. It comes, in that serene and steady light, within the heart : which gilds the blackest cloud, and makes a sunshine in the shadiest place. It comes, in gentle and obedient children ; in kind and trusting friends ; in mutual confidence and sympathy, lightening the loads of life ; in that most genial climate and benignant sky, that ever blesses earth, the quietness and certainty of home. In such a family, the rareness of the indulgence is its flavour. The household feast, which

comes, but now and then ; the family excursion, made, but once, a year ; secure a double blessing : in the light of expectation and the perfume of remembrance. The hardest day of Joseph's toil was lightened, by the sweet submission of that gracious Child ; and, in the beauty of His daily piety, the lowliest cot took, to His mother's eye, the hues of Paradise. It was an inbred and an inwrought happiness. The changes of the world swept by ; but did not touch it. The fickleness of men had never been relied on ; and, so, could bring no disappointment. No pain, no sickness, and no sorrow, could disturb it. For, its depths of peace and tranquil joy lay far below the level, which they stirred. And death, when it should come, would but translate it to a better world ; and make it perfect and eternal.

This is no fancy's sketch, dear brethren, impossible to life. It is what all, who will, through grace, may realize. Would you make yours the happy home of that blest Three, at Nazareth, you must live as they lived. Live lightly to the world. Live near to God. Obey His word. Perform His will. Honour His worship. What has the world done for you, that you should set by it. Has it befriended you ? Has it been just to you ? Can it ease your pains, or soothe your sorrows, or prolong your life ? Live lightly to the world. Live near to God. Let His courts be your chief joy. Make His service your delight. Find, here, your well of life ; and bring your children here, to drink it, with you ; and acclimate them to its serene and holy atmosphere. Baptized into its blessedness,

bring them up, upon its nurture. And, by your own word and deed and good example, realize, in them, the blessed truth, that this is none other than the house of God, and this the gate of heaven. You shall carry back from it, to your firesides, however humble they may be, bright glimpses of a better world, to comfort and to cheer them. You shall drink, here, the water, which shall be in you, a fountain, springing up, unto eternal life. You shall borrow, from the bright original, on which, your hearts are fixed, impressions of its perfect beauty; and be transformed, from grace to grace, into the fulness of its glory.

And, you dear children, who are most especially concerned, in this discourse, make this divine and holy Scripture, your study and your dream. Keep, ever, in your hearts, its sweetest picture of that sweetest Child, which earth has ever seen. Be like Him, in His purity. Be like Him, in His piety. Be like Him, in His charity. Above all, be like Him, in His filial duty and devotion. See Him, in that low cot. See Him, in that poor shop. Observe His industry, His meekness, His cheerfulness, His patience, His un murmuring obedience. He made their will, His own. He took His law, from them. In one word, He "was subject unto them." My children, filial disobedience is the sorest curse of the first sin. It curses children, with unbelief, irreverence and hardness of heart. It curses parents, with a cheerless life, a premature old age, a longed-for grave. It curses homes, with discord and dissension. It curses lands, with murder and rebellion. It is the bane of

earth. It is the worm of hell. Turn, from the contemplation of its horrors, to that serene abode, at Nazareth : its heaven, on earth ; its earth, almost, in heaven. And, in the Holy Child, who was its light and crown and charm, adopt the pattern of your life ; and lay hold of immortality in Him. Unto Whom, one with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be evermore ascribed all glory and all praise. Amen.

SERMON XXI.

Christmas-tide.

THE LORD'S DOING.

ISAIAH XLIV. 23—Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it: shout ye lower parts of the earth, break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself, in Israel.

THE Church prolongs her notes of gladness and of gratitude, for a Redeemer born. It was to Jewish shepherds that the tidings, first, were brought. And, the angelic message, "Glory to God in the highest; on earth, peace; good will, to men," has echoed through the world, as the appropriate Christmas Anthem. But, though salvation was "of the Jews," it was not for them alone. "The consolation of Israel," is described, in the prophetic record, "as the desire of all nations." The leading of a Star proclaims Him to the Gentile world: and, from the anxious East, the wisest of her children hasten, at its rising, to pay her tribute of myrrh and gold and frankincense, to the Incarnate God. But not for Gentiles only is this Epiphany announced. The

universal Lord is to be welcomed by the universal world. Into this great "mystery of godliness," even, angels yet desire to look : and, "unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places," is to be "made known by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God." The Psalmist, long before, descried the grace and glory of this blessed Advent ; and called on earth and heaven, to lift up their voice together, in its glad acknowledgment : "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad ; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof : let the field be joyful, and all that is therein ; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord." And to-day, as you have heard, in the first morning Lesson, the joyful Church turns, for her Anthem, to Isaiah's glowing strain : and takes his prophecy to celebrate the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh : "Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it : shout, ye lower parts of the earth ; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein : for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel."

I. "Sing, O ye heavens ; for the Lord hath done it." Who has not heard how gloriously this glorious vision has been realized ? Who has not heard, how, on that night of nights, the heavens themselves responded to the prophet's challenge ! What thousands, myriads, millions, have listened since, with hearts too full for utterance, to that triumphal song of heaven : "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace : good will, to men."

“Like circles widening round
Upon a calm blue river,
How, still, the wondrous sound
Is echoed on for ever.”

And, how resistless the prophetic argument: “Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it!” *Who, but the Lord, could do it?* Look back, to that sad hour, when clouds and darkness wrapped the groves of Eden. Mark the first ray, which, in the promise of the woman-born, cheers the transgressors. Then, see it; shooting, soaring, spreading. Its struggling glory gilds the brow of Abraham, as he rests beneath the oak of Mamre. It wakes strange visions of the future in the mind of Isaac, as he walks alone at even-tide. It plays about the couch of dying Jacob; and, through the mists of seventeen centuries, gives glimpses of the Shiloh’s coming, and of the gathering of the people to Him. As time rolls on, it gathers brightness, breadth and glory. It flashes from the face of hoary prophets; encircles, with a crown of light, the martyr’s manly brow; beams from the diadem of righteous kings; and in the fulness of the time, breaks on the world, “the Sun of Righteousness.” Shall not the heavens, then, sing? Hath not the Lord accomplished it? Was it not He—who else could do it?—who gave that more sure word of promise, to shine, “as a light, in a dark place,” until the day should dawn, and the day-star arise in men’s hearts? Was it not His wisdom—whose else could know it?—which, through four thousand years, drew out the diagram of prophecy, in lines of living light,

which none could fail to understand? And was it not His power—whose else could compass it?—which, in the sight of men and wondering angels, wrought the problem out upon the Cross? “Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it.” *Who, but the Lord, could do it?* That birth of a pure Virgin, so declared, seven hundred years before; so announced to the meek Mother, by the angel Gabriel; so allowed, for their conviction, whom a prophet or an angel might not satisfy, by the stern strictness of the Jewish Law: what but the power of the Most Highest could accomplish it? That herald angel, those blazing heavens, that celestial multitude, the song of seraphim rehearsed to mortal ears: by whose permission, these things, other than of God? That wondrous Babe; that holy Child; that gracious Youth; that Man, who spake as no man ever spake, and did what no man ever did; His life of spotless purity; His walks of wonder-working mercy; His unbounded and unfaltering love: His Cross, darkening the sun, shaking the earth, bringing the dead to life: the sepulchre, unable to confine Him: the heavens, opening to receive Him: who can behold these things, and not declare with the Centurion, “Truly, this was the Son of God?” And not exclaim with Thomas, “My Lord, and My God!” “Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it?” *Who, but the Lord, could do it?* When the expected Child, of whom all prophecy was but the shadow cast before, was born, His mother laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for Him in the inn. Ten times ten thousand tem-

ples, now are consecrated, to that manger-cradled Babe; kings, with the meanest of their subjects, bow before His altar; and could He stoop again from Heaven, the world, with all its pomp and grandeur would be esteemed too mean for Him, whose birth-place was a stable. Upon the hill of Calvary, stand three crosses. In the centre, hangs the Son of God; a thief on either side. Ten times ten thousand altars bore to-day the emblems of that bleeding sacrifice. A thousand times ten thousand faithful hearts confess their sole dependence on its merits. And, through the world, the triumphs of the Crucified are as apparent, as if all eyes could see, with Constantine, that radiant Cross, and its inscription, "By this, conquer!" Shall not the heavens, then, sing? For, is it not Jehovah, who hath done it? The prophecies, which preceded, the miracles, which attended, the triumphs, which have followed the incarnation of the Saviour: are not these the Lord's own work? And shall the heavens rejoice alone? Shall not the earth reply, "Shout, ye lower parts of the earth, break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel."

II. i. "The Lord hath redeemed Jacob." That you may rightly rejoice in this redemption, consider what it cost. "Here you shall find"—I state the contrast in the words of Jeremy Taylor, the golden-mouth of modern times—"here you shall find concentrated the prodigies of greatness and goodness, of meekness and

charity, of wisdom and humility; and march, all the way, in mystery and mixtures, incomprehensible. You shall consider Him in the bosom of His Father; where He is seated by the postures of love, and essential felicity: and, in the manger, where love also placed Him, and an infinite desire to communicate His own felicities to us. As God, having His throne in heaven, and filling all things by His immensity: as man, circumscribed by an uneasy cradle, and lying in a stable. As God, seated on a super-exalted throne: as man, exposed to the lowest state of uneasiness and need. As God, encircled with multitudes of angels: as man, in the company of beasts. As God, eternal, self-sustained, all-sufficient: as man, compassed about, sin only excepted, with all human infirmity." At such a cost it was, and with such arguments of love—"Shout, ye lower parts of the earth, break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein:"—it was at such a cost, and with such arguments of love, that "the Lord redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel."

II. ii. 1. "The Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel;" *for God is reconciled to man.* The commandment, upon which man's probation turned, involved the penalty of death. Had the transgressor been cut off by it at once from any hope of restoration, justice, indeed, had triumphed. But where had been the ministry of mercy? Had heaven been opened to him in his disobedience, where were the majesty of justice? It was the object of the Incarnation to reconcile the two: to bring righteousness and peace together; to

sustain the holiness of God, yet let the sinner live ; in one word, to proclaim as angels did, "Glory to God in the highest : " and, yet, through His redeeming love, who put away all sin, by the sacrifice of Himself, to add, as angels did, "on earth, peace ; good will to men."

2. "The Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel ;" for *He hath revealed to man the path of duty*. Before, "darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." God was unknown. Duty was undefined. Virtue, an unsettled question of the schools. By the revelation of Himself, God has decided every controversy. The path of duty is traced out, as with a sunbeam. The motives to walk in it, and the means to walk in it aright, are multiplied and diffused. The word of God is a light to our feet. The mercy of the Holiest propitiated by the mediation of the Incarnate, gives free encouragement to all, who will, to come to Him. The graces of the Holy Spirit—to the fearful, courage ; to the ignorant, wisdom ; to the feeble, strength—are as the wings of eagles, to soar upward, towards God.

3. Finally, "the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel ;" for *the kingdom of heaven is opened to all believers*. Upon the ancient world, hung shadows, clouds, and darkness. Over the grave was written, "Hope comes not here." Generation after generation had gone down to it. No footstep had returned. No glimpse had been descried. No voice had made reply. The Saviour came ; and its dark portals were unbarred. To its bruised captives, liberty

was offered. Through the tender mercy of our God, the day-spring from on high has shed its radiance even there. And, to them that sit in the valley and shadow of death, light is given, to guide their feet in the way of peace. "Sing, ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein:" for, reconciling us to Himself, instructing us in the way of duty, and opening heaven for our reception, "the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel."

Beloved brethren, that the Lord, who "hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel," may complete His work, and see of the harvest of His soul, and be satisfied with it, our souls must be redeemed from all iniquity, and He must be glorified in us, as "a peculiar people, zealous of good works." In vain, for us, the Incarnation, if Christ be not formed within us, "the hope of glory." Joyless, the Nativity for us, if we, "as new-born babes desire" not "the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby." Cheerless for us, even the Star of Bethlehem, if we arise not at its rising; and seek, with humble faith, the Saviour who has given Himself, for us; and, in our lives reflect, His glorious brightness, in works of truth and purity. The true Epiphany, for us, to rejoice in, must be formed within. There, the day must dawn. There, the day-star must arise. There, the bright shining of the Sun of Righteousness must be diffused, and felt. To be God's children, we must be "children of the light."

To walk with Him, we must “walk in the light.” To attain the light of His presence, hereafter, we must continually seek, by prayer and penitence, the light of His reconciled countenance, here. So, “we, who know Him, now, by faith,” after this life, shall “have the fruition of His glorious Godhead.” We shall, so, behold His presence: and, when we wake, after His likeness, be satisfied with it, forever.

SERMON XXII.

THE CIRCUMCISION.

ST. LUKE II. 21.—And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, His name was called Jesus; which was so named of the angel, before he was conceived, in the womb.

“The year begins, with Thee;
And Thou beginn’st, with woe:
To let the world of sinners see,
That blood, for sin, must flow.”

It is in these true and touching words, that the Poet of the Church marks the coincidence of the Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord, with the secular New Year. Even the world’s account of time, whether it will or no, must take complexion from the Cross; and be sprinkled on its brow, with sacred blood. Is it not, as in that beautiful devotion of the elder days, when the first-fruits of the ripening harvest were brought to God, and laid upon His altar; that so His blessing might descend, upon the fields of waving gold? Oh, that there were, in us, such a heart! That Christian people would come up, on the first day of the New Year, since they do accept the computation of the world, and lay it down before the Lord; and sign

themselves, in doing so, with His most painful Cross, in some marked act of self-devotion and self-denial; and make, anew, the dedication, of themselves, their souls, and bodies, which was made, in Holy Baptism; and beseech Him to accept the days, of all the years, which yet remain, to them, as consecrated to His service; and to bless them, if not with health, and, what the world esteems, prosperity, with, what is better far, and certain to be given, to faithful prayers, "all spiritual blessings, in Christ Jesus!" Alas, how different, from this, the thoughts and customs of the season! For self-denial, self-indulgence! For self-sacrifice, an unrestrained abandonment to every sensual thing! For the true circumcision of the Spirit, the utmost license of the flesh! For obedience in all things to the will of God, the headlong prosecution of our own! Feasts; but, not, for the poor! Holidays; but, not, holy days! Gifts; but, not, for Christ's sake! Visits; but, not, to the fatherless and widows, in their affliction! Wishes; but, not, for heaven, or heavenly things! A new Year; but, not, a new heart! Scarcely, the shadow of the thought of a new life! And, these, the ways of Christians! These things, in the light of the blessed Gospel of the Son of God! These things, within sight of the painful Cross, on which He died! These things, within hearing of the infant wailings, with which the Saviour of the world, when He was eight days old, began His labour of self-sacrificing love! Alas, my brethren, Jews were more consistent. Heathens are more consistent. The world is more con-

sistent. We, of the Gospel ; we, of the Church ; we, of the Christ ; we, of the Cross ; it is we, who belie our profession : who deny our Master ; who despise His sufferings for us. We have the Christian name ; but, not, the Christian nature. We hear the Gospel ; but, we do not heed it. We set the Cross up ; but, we do not bear it. We bathe in Jesus' blood ; but, one drop of ours is more than we can give Him. Where are our prayers ; such as He prayed ? Where are our walks of mercy ; such as He pursued, with bare and bleeding feet ? Where are our tears ; such as He shed ? Where are our watchings ; such as His were ? Where is our meekness ; such as His was ? Our patience ; such as His was ? Our resignation to the will of God ; such as His was ? Our forgiveness of our enemies ; such as His was ? Are we not Christians, by the courtesy ; rather than, by the Cross ? And, when the Cross shall be revealed from heaven the token of the judgment, as it was on earth the token of salvation, can we, who stumble at it now, and bear it not so much as with the least of all our fingers, and live precisely as if Christ had never died for us : can we escape its terrors, or can we endure its wrath ?

At the time of Circumcision, the name was always given. Abram was, then, called Abraham. The wondrous child of Zacharias and Elizabeth took, then, the name of John. He that was Virgin-born, was, then, called Jesus ; as the Angel, forty weeks before, had said He should be named. The new name was the token of a new relation. It was the owning of the cove-

nant; and, so, the claiming of its blessings. In Him, who, as, at this time, took the name of Jesus, all was done for us: done, for our comfort; done, for our admonition. It was for our comfort, that He took that comfortable name: "thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins." It was, also, for our admonition that, ransomed by His blood, we should walk before Him, in righteousness and true holiness: a people prepared for the Lord. How far we all have failed, and fallen short, of this, there needs no voice from heaven to say. Faint and feeble, in the comparison of our short-comings and misdoings, are the humiliating words, put into all our mouths, by the true Spouse of Christ, our fond, but, disregarded, Mother. "We have erred, and strayed from Thy ways, like lost sheep; we have followed, too much, the devices and desires of our own hearts; we have offended against Thy holy laws; we have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us." To-day, while yet, the year is new, let us betake ourselves to God, with penitence and prayer. Let us beseech Him, in the language of our Advent supplications, to "raise up His power and come among us, and with great might succour us: that, whereas, through our sins and wickedness, we are sore let and hindered, in running the race that is set before us," His "bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us." Oh, that a New Year might begin in us, this day! Oh, that a new heart might be given us,

and a new life ! Oh, that He, who, as at this time, made His blessed Son obedient to the Law, for us, in suffering and blood, would “grant us the true circumcision of the Spirit,” “that our hearts and all our members, being mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts,” we might, “in all things obey His blessed will ;” walking worthy of the vocation, wherewith we are called ; and adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

There is before us, in the holy Eucharist, a lively emblem, a powerful motive, and a blessed means, for such as heartily desire to lead a new and better life. *A lively emblem*, in the blood which is commemorated here ; the full flow of that pure, priceless stream, whose first drops, as at this time, fell. *A powerful motive*, in the bleeding argument, which it presents, of our dear Saviour’s dying love for us. *A blessed means*, of all, we can desire or do : Since He has said, who *does* and *is*, it all ; “Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in Me, and I, in him.”

“ Fresh, from the atoning Sacrifice,
The world’s Creator, bleeding, lies,
That man, His foe, by whom He bled,
May take Him, in his daily bread.
O, agony of wavering thought,
When sinners, first, so near, are brought ;
It is my Maker ; dare I stay ?
My Saviour ; dare I turn away ? ”

Merciful Saviour, draw us to Thee, now, by the blood of Thy Circumcision, that we may live forever, through the blood of Thy Crucifixion.

SERMON XXIII.

The Epiphany.

THE WORSHIP OF THE WISE MEN.

NUMBERS XXIV. 17.—There shall come a Star, out of Jacob ; and a Sceptre shall rise, out of Israel.

ST. MATTHEW 11. 2.—Where is He, that is born, King of the Jews ? For we have seen His star, in the East ; and are come to worship Him.

BETWEEN these texts, there is an interval, of fourteen hundred and fifty years. So long, it took, for prophecy to ripen, into history. And, such a glorious ripening ! God overrules His laws, in nature ; so that a Virgin conceives, and bears a Son. The Angel of His immediate presence, is the herald to announce it, to her. At the time of life, the Angel of the Lord makes known the wondrous birth, to shepherds, in the fields of Bethlehem. And, suddenly, the multitude of the heavenly host vie with each other, in that noblest of all hymns, “Glory to God, in the highest ; and, on earth peace ; good will toward men.” And scarcely had the heavenly anthem ceased, when, “by the leading of a star,”

“The Masters of the starry lore
From Ophir’s shore of gold,”

are prostrate at His infant feet, with their choice stores of gold and myrrh and frankincense. So had Isaiah said, seven hundred years before : “ Arise, shine ; for thy light is come ; and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.” “ The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah ; all they from Sheba shall come : they shall bring gold and incense ; and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord.” And, so, had David sung, ten centuries, before. “ The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents ; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.” “ To Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba ; prayer also shall be made for Him, continually ; and daily shall He be praised.” “ His name shall endure forever : His name shall be continued, as long as the sun : and men shall be blessed in Him : all nations shall call Him blessed.”

“ He shall descend like showers
Upon the fruitful earth ;
And love and joy, like flowers,
Spring, in His path, to birth.
Before Him, on the mountains,
Shall peace, the herald, go ;
And righteousness, in fountains,
From hill, to valley, flow.”

How wonderful this merging of the prophetic in the historic. An ancient heathen is favoured, in his blindness, with dim glimpses of the truth of God. He hears the words of God. He sees the vision of the Almighty.

He falls into a trance; but his eyes are open. A neighbouring prince had sought him for his divinations, to help him against the power of Israel. But how could he curse whom the Lord hath not cursed? Or how could he defy whom the Lord hath not defied? He bursts into the noblest strain of poetry. He paints, in words that burn, the fortunes of the chosen people. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth; as gardens by the river's side; as the trees of lign-aloes, which the Lord hath planted; and as cedar-trees, beside the waters." He takes a loftier strain: "He shall pour the water out of the buckets; and his seed shall be in many waters; and his king shall be higher than Agag; and his kingdom shall be exalted. God brought him forth out of Egypt. He hath, as it were, the strength of an unicorn. He shall eat up the nations, his enemies; and shall break their bones; and pierce them through, with his arrows. He couched. He lay down, as a lion, and as a great lion; who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee; and cursed is he, that curseth thee." The wrath of Balak is aroused. He threatens, where he cannot buy. The menace and the bribe are, both, in vain. "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad, of my own mind: but, what the Lord saith, that will I speak." And then, with the divine composure of one, who casts himself on God, he utters, as the Lord had taught him, his wondrous words of prophecy. "I shall

see him ; but not, now : I shall behold Him ; but not nigh : there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel." We think the Argonautic expedition, of remote antiquity. This prophecy was given two hundred years before it. The Trojan war seems old, to us. This was two hundred and fifty years older. We think of Homer, as an ancient. He was after Balaam, six hundred years. It was seven centuries before the founding of the Roman empire by Romulus. It was nine hundred and fifty years, before Marathon. The age of Pericles was later by eleven hundred years. And Alexander the Great was later by twelve centuries. How true it is, "that one day is with the Lord, as a thousand years ; and a thousand years as one day." The Mesopotamian prophet, the victim of the wages of unrighteousness, perishes miserably, by the sword, whose victories he had foretold. But, he spoke the words, which God put into his mouth. And, pass, what may, they stand. The Golden Fleece is sought and won. The siege of Troy fulfils its seven years circuit. Sparta and Athens flourish. David is shepherd boy, and king. Solomon consecrates his Temple. Nineveh falls. The mud walls which are to sway the world are built along the Tiber. Tyre is taken by Nebuchadnezzar. Cyrus achieves his victories. Xerxes lays chains upon the sea. Leonidas gives immortality to Thermopylæ. Pericles makes Athens glorious. Socrates drains the hemlock. Alexander wins the world. It is a thousand years before the Laws of the Twelve Tables at Rome. It is twelve

hundred years before the Romans had a silver coin. It is thirteen hundred years before they had a Library. It is a thousand years to Demosthenes. It is fourteen hundred years to Cicero. How every thing is dwarfed in this comparison ! How truly are God's days a thousand years. Not till Julius Cæsar had conquered Britain ; not till the battle of Actium had settled the mastery of the world ; not till the two-leaved gates of Janus had been shut, in token of universal peace ; not till Augustus Cæsar was established as the master of the world ; could the Star come out of Jacob which should be a light to lighten the Gentiles ; and the Sceptre come out of Israel, which should subdue all the kingdoms, into one. God could wait ; for His time is eternity : "patient, because eternal." Then the Virgin should conceive and bear a Son. Then the heavens themselves would break out into gladness. "Glory to God in the highest ; and on earth peace, good will toward men." For, now, the woman's Seed which was to bruise the serpent's head, was made incarnate, by the Holy Ghost, of that most blessed Virgin. And now the words of Isaiah, which had waited upon God, seven hundred years, were all fulfilled : "unto us *the* child is born ; unto us *the* Son is given ; and the government shall be upon His shoulders ; and His name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

"Late in time, behold Him, come,
Offspring of the Virgin's womb :
Christ, by highest heaven, adored ;
Christ, the everlasting Lord."

Now prophecy is history. Not a word that God has spoken, by the mouth of His holy ones, fails of its fulfilment. The woman's Seed is to be the Saviour of the world. For a while the Jews are trustees of the promises. But *light* will spread. The shining of the Star will work its way through clouds. At the moment, it will burst upon the world. Everywhere, men were feeling after it. Everywhere, men were peering out, for it. Everywhere, men were listening for the voice of welcome, that should greet it.

“ No war or battle sound
Was heard the world around ;
The idle spear and shield were high uphung.
The hookéd chariot stood
Unstained with hostile blood ;
The trumpet spake not to the arméd throng ;
And kings sat still, with awful eye,
As if they surely knew, their Sovereign Lord were nigh.”

In every quarter of the world, the expectation was alive. From every quarter of the world, the hearts and eyes of men turned toward Judea. The heathen Authors have been made unwilling witnesses for Christ. Tacitus says, “ Most people were persuaded that it was on record in the ancient writings of the priests, that at that time the East should have the ascendent ; and some, who came out of Judea, attain the universal empire.” And Suetonius says, “ An old and established opinion had spread through all the East, that some, who sprung from Judea, should have the empire of the world.” As the time drew near, the portents thick-

ened and grew plain. The ancient temples felt the chill of their approaching dissolution. Old forms of heathen worship shrunk away, from their accustomed grandeur. The priests grew pale. The fires upon the altars flickered. The very Gods upon Olympus shivered and were dismayed.

“The oracles are dumb ;

No voice or hideous hum

Runs through the archéd roof in words deceiving ;

Apollo, from his shrine,

Can no more divine ;

With hollow shriek, the steep of Delphos, leaving,

No nightly trance or breathéd spell

Inspires the pale-eyed priest, from the prophetic cell.”

The words of that old Aramæan prophet have gone out through all the East. Upon the Persian hills, the wise men watch the stars. The time, they know, is near for Balaam's star to rise. They scan, with keener search, the radiant maze. No speck of light, so small, that they have not made sure of it. No space of blue, so scant, that they have not its measure. But, see ! A stranger orb gleams on their earnest gaze. A new light kindles in the heavens. The Star of Bethlehem appears. It travels, westward, toward Judea. *Did not the Mesopotamian say, “A Star shall come out of Jacob ?”* Its brilliancy gives presage of some new and glorious dynasty. *Did not the Mesopotamian say, “A sceptre shall arise out of Israel ?”* They rise in haste. They gird them for their journey. *Is it a king that they would seek ?* They store themselves with

royal gifts of gold. *May not the monarch be divine?* They fill their censers, with Arabian frankincense. *Must he establish His divinity by dying, first; and rising from the dead?* What emblem, so expressive of His immortal mortalness, as the embalming myrrh? They start upon their search. The star precedes them. It guides them to Jerusalem. They ask, without a doubt, "Where is He that is born king of the Jews?" They give the reason for their confidence; "for we have seen His star in the East, and are come to worship Him." Herod, in dread, calls priests and scribes together, to declare the birth-place of the Christ. The sacred roll is opened. Micah, though dead seven hundred years, offers himself to be the teacher of the Eastern Magi. "And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet; and thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judea, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a governor, that shall rule my people Israel." The labours of the distant journey are forgotten. They feel no weariness. They ask no rest. The Star resumes its place. They follow in its radiant wake. It leads them into Bethlehem; and stands at last over where the young Child is. The Mesopotamian spoke the truth. It is the Star that shows the Star. They enter the house. They see the young Child with His Mother. They fall in prostrate reverence. They open their treasures. They present unto Him gifts: the gold, the frankincense, the myrrh. The morning Star took its station over the stable at Bethlehem. "And Eastern

Magi are the earliest worshippers of Mary's Holy Child." "The Root and Offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star."

"Sceptre and Star divine,
Who in Thine inmost shrine,
Hast made us worshippers, O claim Thine own,
More than Thy seers we know—
O teach our love to grow
Up to Thy heavenly light; and reap what thou hast sown."

Beloved, we have seen His Star. But have we come to worship Him? Like the Eastern Magi, do we leave all to go to Him? Do we leave any thing? Do we not cling to self? Cling to the world? Cling to our sins? As if no star had risen upon our sight?

Beloved, we have seen His Star. But have we come to worship Him? Like the Eastern Magi do we come to Him where He is? Do we seek Him in His church? Do we delight to tread its courts? Do we fall down and worship Him? Would they have waited until Sunday came, to go to Bethlehem? Would a Spring shower or a half inch of snow have kept them from His presence? Would they have lolled in listless languor through the service, in which saints in every age have poured their hearts out, before God?

Beloved, we have seen His Star. But have we come to worship Him? Like the Eastern Magi, do we open our treasures, and present Him gifts? Do we pour out our gold, our frankincense, our myrrh before Him? Would they have felt in their deep pockets, for the

smallest coin? Would they have grudged the beggar, his poor crust, or the Missionary, *his* scant stipend? Would they have calculated, what it cost them, for their seat in Church?

Beloved, there are countless questions such as these, which the Epiphany suggests. Epiphany means shining on. The light, which breaks from Bethlehem on our hearts, is but the harbinger of the eternal fires unless it shine in all our lives, in piety and holiness, and beam on all the world, in words and deeds of charity. David had sung a thousand years before, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound." Not however, unless they walk in the light of His countenance. Not unless they rejoice in His name. Not unless they are exalted in His righteousness.

"Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid!
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid!

"Say, shall we yield Him, in costly devotion,
Odours of Edom, and offerings divine—
Gems of the mountain, and pearls of the Ocean,
Myrrh from the forest, or gold from the mine?

"Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gifts would His favour secure;
Richer by far is the heart's adoration,
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor."

Holy Saviour, who at this time, came, a little child to us, bring us, as little children, all to Thee!

SERMON XXIV.

Lent.

THE OFFERS AND THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE CROSS.

ST. MATTHEW XXI. 10.—Who is this ?

IN the manger of the stable of an inn at Bethlehem, a new-born child is laid. There are with it, but the meek Mother, and a mild and meditative man. And, yet, a company of shepherds throng the door. The midnight sky is radiant, with a more than earthly light. The music of celestial songs dies out, upon the ear. There is a fluttering above it, as of Angels' wings. And, all the air is fragrant, with an Angel's breath. "*Who is this ?*"

Before the door of a mean house, in Bethlehem, there is a multitude of camels. The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah are there. There are others, still, from Sheba. They are freighted heavily. A company of venerable men dismount. A brilliant star dies out, above that humble door ; just as they enter it. There is but a Mother, and an infant, there. And, yet, they bow, with lowliest reverence, upon the threshold.

They open all their stores. They present unto Him gifts. Ingots of purest gold. Flakes of the finest frankincense. The Abyssinian myrrh. They fall down before the child. They worship Him. "*Who is this?*"

The Feast is over. The Paschal crowd is scattered. Only the dwellers in Jerusalem attend the Temple worship. It is the day after the Passover. In an apartment of the Temple, there is a gathering of the doctors of the Law. They are engaged in high discourse. Amidst them, sits a boy of twelve years old. He mingles in their conversation. By turns He listens to their questions, and propounds His own. He is meek and modest. And yet, self-possessed and firm. There is no theme of theirs beyond His reach. There is no thought of theirs, which He does not anticipate. They are "astonished at His understanding and His answers." "*Who is this?*"

We are in Nazareth. Along a street, we pass a shop. An aged man, a carpenter, is working in it. By his side, there is a boy of twelve years old. More than angelic beauty is beaming, in His face. More than angelic grace is manifest, in every movement. As we look, again, it is the very boy, by whom, the doctors were astonished. And, yet, he is at work, at the same bench, with that old carpenter. And to wait on him, and save his steps, and do his will, seems the one thought that fills His heart. "*Who is this?*"

There is a stranger in Jerusalem. He has no house. He has no home. As He passes, people stop, and turn around to gaze upon the loveliness which lights His

countenance. He does not lift His voice up in the street: but His words are wisdom, truth, and love. He looks upon the sick; and they are cured. He speaks to the deaf; and they hear. He touches the blind; and they see. He meets a bier; and the widow's son revives. He takes a dead girl by the hand; and she arises. He speaks to Lazarus in his grave; and he comes forth. "*Who is this?*"

There is a garden over the brook Kedron. It is a sweet and solitary place. The paschal moon is broad and bright in heaven. In a secluded clump of olive trees, there is one prostrate, in an agony of prayer. He is alone. The three who were with Him, are sleeping, by themselves. Three times He falls upon the earth. And every time, His prayer is one, "if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt!" As He rises to rejoin the slumbering three, we see that it is He who healed the broken heart at Nain, and sent the lepers back, to their deserted homes. "*Who is this?*"

There are three crosses, on Mount Calvary. Upon the outer two, there are two thieves, in writhing anguish. The central Sufferer meekly bows His head. What sacred words break from His pallid lips. "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do!" And again, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." And again, "It is finished." He has breathed out His life. The sun is dark. The earth is shaken. The rocks are rent. The graves are opened. The dead come forth. "*Who is this?*"

In a garden there is a sepulchre. It is hewn from the solid rock. It is covered with a massive stone. It is sealed with Pilate's seal. It is a new tomb. But one was ever laid in it; and He, but yesterday. And that His sleep may be unbroken, a guard of Roman soldiers has been set upon it. Before the day there is the sound of feet approaching it. It is love's pilgrimage. And women are of course the pilgrims. They would weep once more upon their darling. They would anoint His body with sweet spices. His memory is embalmed in their hearts. But He is gone. The seal is broke. The guard are as dead men. The stone is rolled away. The Sleeper has arisen. "*Who is this?*"

At evening, the small company that had been with Him in His life, and were bereaved in His death, are gathered in an upper room. The doors are shut. Fear mingles with their sorrow. But while they talk and weep, He stands among them. The doors have not been opened; and yet He is there. It is He. For they have seen His wounds. It is He. For they have heard His voice. It is He. For they have felt His peace. "*Who is this?*"

There is a little company upon Mount Olivet. There is one upon whose lips they hang; upon whose face their eyes are fixed; whom they cling to, as about to leave them. Again the heavens are opened. Again the clouds are radiant with the light from the immediate throne. Again, there is the fluttering of angelic wings. Again, there is the fragrance of angelic breath.

And He ascends to heaven. They gaze up after Him. But He is gone. "*Who is this?*"

Upon the dulness of a slumbering world, a trumpet rings abroad, that shakes the solid earth. The heavens are opened; and let down the throne. From every spot, which death has consecrated, from the mountains, from the valleys, from the sea, the dead come forth. They make, with all that live, one solemn, endless, caravan. They gather to one place. They gaze upon one object. They are riveted with one thought. Slowly the throne descends. Angelic hosts accompany it. One sits on it, in form like unto the Son of Man. His hands are pierced. His feet are pierced. His side is pierced. He looks on that innumerable multitude. And they divide in silence, such as human heart has never felt; and are forever parted: to the right and to the left: sharers with Him, of His Eternal, glorious kingdom; or, forever exiled from His presence and His peace. "*Who is this?*"

Beloved, in these poor sketches, with their flickering lights and feeble shadows, you behold the dim prospective of the panorama of redemption. What a revelation of the sinfulness of sin! What a demonstration of the love of God! What other words, so sure to break from every heart, that is not hardened into stone, as those of holy Paul, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation." Think what a ruin that must have been, which needed such salvation. Think, what a ruin, that must be, for which such salvation shall be unavailing.

That divine infant ; that wondrous boy ; that matchless man ; that life, of want, and toil, and persecution ; that agony ; that death : for these, the Son, incarnate ; in these, the only Begotten, a sufferer ; by these, the blood of God, shed, in the world, which He had made ! My beloved, what other exposition so appalling of the sinfulness of sin ; which cost, and wrought it, all !

And, then, that Cross, the engine, that shall rend the grave ; that Cross, the car of triumph that shall bear the sufferer up to heaven ; that Cross, the throne, on which the Judge shall come, again, to earth : what other demonstration so conclusive, of their utter ruin, whom that Cross shall fail to save ! How, “how, shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation.”

How shall we escape, if we neglect its offers. How shall we escape, if we neglect its means ? How shall we escape, if we neglect its obligations ?

How shall we escape if we neglect its offers ? Think, what they are ! Pardon from sin, deliverance from death, eternity in heaven. Think, who proposes them ! The God, your sins have outraged. Think, what they cost ! The blood of His dear Son. And you neglect them ! You hear them, as a twice-told tale ! You turn away from them, as if they never had been made ! You live uninfluenced and unimpressed by them ! You die without their comfort ! You go into eternity without their peace ! “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him for ever.” Beloved, how can you escape if you neglect the offers of such great salvation ?

How shall we escape if we neglect its means? He makes His offers, on conditions. He says, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." You refuse to be baptized. What if Naaman had refused to wash in Jordan? He gives His Holy Spirit, in "the laying on of hands." You refuse to be confirmed. What if the Samaritan believers had turned away from John and Peter, when they came, to them, to bring that heavenly gift? He gives Himself to be the spiritual food of your immortal souls: the heavenly Manna which is to feed them for eternal life. And you refuse to come. You turn your backs upon the banquet. What if the Jews had spurned the manna, which fell like snow about their camps? Is it not written, "Except a man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God?" Is it not written, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost?" Is it not written, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you!" Beloved, how shall you escape, if you neglect the means of such great salvation?

How shall we escape if we neglect its obligations? It is a salvation, from sin, to holiness. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall all perish." In vain, your acceptance of its offers. In vain, your employment of its means. "It is with the heart that man believeth, unto righteousness." It is in the life, that salvation must be accomplished. Unless ye put off "the old man, which is corrupt, according to the

deceitful lusts ;” unless ye are “renewed in the spirit of your mind ;” unless ye “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness :” the blood of Jesus will but serve to write the record of your condemnation ; and His Cross, but crucify you through eternity. Beloved, how shall ye escape if ye neglect the obligations of such great salvation.

Again, beloved ones, the solemn Lenten season brings its pleadings. It pleads once more with you for Christ. It pleads once more for you that He may be your Jesus, the Saviour of your souls. It beseeches you by His Fasting and Temptation. It beseeches you by His Agony and Bloody Sweat. It beseeches you by His Cross and Passion. It beseeches you by His precious Death and Burial. Think, my beloved, if these pleadings with you be its last. Think, if before another Lent you be where Lazarus may not come to bring to you one cooling drop. Think, if the shadow of the Crucifixion fall next time upon your tombstone. Think, if the next Easter glory shed, upon your grave, no promise of a joyful resurrection. Blessed Saviour, be our Saviour from ourselves—from our selfishness, from our self-will, from our self-ruin—and unto Thee, Thou bleeding Jesus, with Thy loving Father, and Thy striving Spirit, the Persons, three, the Godhead, only one, shall be the glory and the praise here and for evermore.

SERMON XXV.

Lent.

THE SELF-CONQUEST OF THE CROSS.

ST. MARK VIII. 34, 35—And when He had called the people unto Him, with His disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For, whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life, for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

It is now past Mid-Lent. The dreadful Crucifixion is at hand. Already the glooms of Passion week begin to gather. Let us prepare ourselves for the sad scene. Let us collect in silence, at the Cross, on which our hopes are hung. To Calvary indeed we cannot come, to gaze upon its awful grandeur. But its black shadow lies upon the world. And if we draw ourselves within it, with true, penitent, and faithful hearts, we may, through grace, be strengthened to endure its load. For the Cross is double, as it bore the Saviour; and as the saved must bear it. And it is double, in another sense: as it shall save; and as it shall destroy. Fearful, indeed, to think of: that the fountain opened in the pierced side, against all nature, should send forth, at the same place, sweet water and bitter; that, from that

sacred mouth, blessing and cursing should proceed ; that the sweet, dying breath, which filled the heavens with fragrance, should, to some, be the savour of life, and to others, the savour of death. And, yet, it is so. And, one day, we shall know it. And our wisdom and our happiness consist, in knowing it in time.

With this impression let us look carefully into the text. It is not one which only interests a few ; which interests only those who choose to take an interest in it. It is, by its own terms, of universal application. “And, when He had called all the people unto Him, with His disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow Me. For, whosoever will save his life shall lose it ; but whosoever shall lose his life, for My sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it :” which may be stated thus :

WHOEVER WILL BE SAVED MUST BEAR HIS CROSS :

THAT IS TO SAY, HE MUST DENY HIMSELF AND FOLLOW
CHRIST ;

AND NOT WITHHOLD HIS VERY LIFE, FOR CHRIST’S
SAKE AND THE GOSPEL’S.

I. *Whosoever will be saved must bear His Cross.* Take notice of the very words. They are peculiar, and full of meaning : “Whosoever will come after Me, let him take up his Cross.” There must be a Cross. It must be his Cross. He must take it up himself.

i. *There must be a Cross.* “Whosoever will come after Me, let him take up his *Cross*.” The ancient

Christians, in their curious thoughtfulness, noticed the Cross in every thing. The form of the body, with the arms outstretched ; trees with their branches ; the masts and yards of ships ; the anchor ; and the plough. And in this, as in so many other things, nature does seem allegorical of grace. That the true Cross of Jesus Christ might be for all, the Lamb was slain, from the foundation of the world. The tree of life in that fair garden, was its emblem. And in the words, in which the curse was passed upon the serpent, “thou shalt bruise His heel,” we almost hear, through forty centuries before it was set up, the framing of the Cross. But while the single Cross, with its one Victim, is sufficient, in its infinite sacrifice, for the propitiation of all the sins of all mankind, it is made actual only to the hearts in which, through penitential faith, it is set up again. “God forbid that I should glory,” the Apostle says, and states the doctrine in a single sentence,—“God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ ; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” There is no salvation for any but in the Cross. There is no salvation there for any but as it is a personal Cross, for personal crucifixion. The brazen serpent which was set up in the wilderness, had healing in it for the whole of suffering Israel. Only as each particular sufferer looked upon the emblem, and its image fell upon his heart, was it made actual to him. In the thick shades of dire Gethsemane, the Saviour kneels and prays. From His crushed heart the blood is wrung in drops. It falls upon the brow of

every penitent believer, the sprinkling of salvation. And as the sacred sign must mark him as the Lord's, so must the dreadful tree, for which it stands, be rooted in his heart; and bear its bitter fruits in penitential fear and godly sorrow, through his life: crucifying the world unto him, while it crucifies him unto the world.

ii. *And it must be his own Cross.* "Whosoever will come after Me, let him" "take up *his* Cross." Men fondly think of every trouble as a Cross. They seem to ascribe to trouble the mysterious value to sanctify by its own power. But, in the first place, troubles are but trials; and the issue may be good or may be evil: as clay hardens where wax melts; and the furnace which refined Moses consumed Pharaoh. And, then, in the second place, when troubles help to sanctify, they are not therefore Crosses. They are parts of God's usual discipline. They are the chastening of His hand. They are the nurture of His children. Would it be right to call the rod with which our children are chastised their Cross? Are the restraints and penalties of schools and governments all Crosses? Is the prison, or the pillory, or the scaffold, a Cross? I have mine. You, yours. Another, his. The Cross is private. Only God knows it, and our heart. The Cross is not vindictive. Jesus had done no sin. *His* Cross was expiatory, for us. *Ours*, is for conformity, to Him. As that greatest Doctor of the Cross taught of himself—"that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death." In a word, the

Cross, which the Christian is to bear, is for self-discipline.

iii. *He must, therefore, take it up himself.* "Who-soever will come after Me, let him take up his Cross." None laid the Cross on Jesus Christ. He came from heaven to bear it. He humbled Himself to our flesh, that He might suffer it. He went steadfastly towards it. He cheerfully embraced it. Not, because He loved it. Not, that it was not a Cross to Him. He was a man. "The flesh will quiver, where the pincers tear." He said, "Father, if it be possible." But He also said, "Nevertheless, not as I will." So with our Cross. It must be borne, that God's will may be done in us. It must be borne cheerfully. Else it were only submitted to, by us; as the ox endures the yoke. The Cross is for self-subjection. And self must stoop to it. The Cross is for self-control. And self must submit to it. The Cross is for self-crucifixion. And self must embrace it, and clasp it, and cling to it; until it die upon it.

"Lovest thou praise? The Cross is shame;
Or ease? the Cross is bitter grief:
More pangs, than tongue or heart can frame,
Were suffered there without relief.

Thy precious things, whate'er they be,
That taunt and vex thee, heart and brain;
Look to the Cross, and thou shalt see,
How thou may'st turn them all to gain."

II. In a word, as self was the cause of the Fall, and the Fall the occasion for the Cross, so the office of the

Cross in us is the subjection of self. To "take up the Cross," and to "deny himself," are terms convertible. The essence of the Cross is self-denial. And as the Incarnation of the Son of God was one infinite act of self-denial, so to deny self and take up the Cross, are one in aim and end. And that is just the Saviour's explanation. "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow Me."

i. Whosoever will be saved, must so bear his Cross, as to deny himself. At the Fall, our nature lost its perpendicular. The sinner leans from God. The angle varies, with the individual. It is ruinous in all; and, in way of nature, constantly enlarging. The problem of salvation is the restoration of the upright. The power to work it is the Cross. The Cross of Christ external to us, the price of our redemption. The Cross wrought in upon the heart, and ruling there, the principle of our renewal, in His image who redeemed us. The trial and the degree of self-denial, of course, will vary, with the self, that is to be denied; the aim but one's reunion with God; the rule and standard, His unerring law. Two things will, therefore, be essential: knowledge of self, the knowledge of His word. Two processes, indispensable; self-examination, the study of the Scriptures. What they forbid must be resisted. Self-promptings, at variance with them, must be denied. If it be a right hand, it must be cut off. If it be a right eye, it must be plucked out. These are strong expressions. People call them figures; that they may escape them. But are they stronger than the fact? Is any

thing so hard as to deny one's self? Do not men submit without a groan to amputation, who cannot control an inordinate desire? Do they not suffer more than amputation for their indulgence in unlawful pleasures? Why try to wink the matter out of sight? Why not look at it with both eyes? Admit that hardest of all things to self is to deny itself; and boldly, in God's strength, achieve it, through the Cross. Not by a single stroke, indeed. It is a life-long struggle. And so our Saviour tells us by St. Luke: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross daily, and follow Me." One point assailed, to-day; to-morrow, another; a third, the next day. Nothing done while any thing is undone. The subtleties of self to be detected. The plausibilities of self to be exposed. The inventiveness of self to be counteracted. The boldness of self to be confronted. The tenacity of self to be outwearied. The wilfulness of self to be outwilled. In one word, and there is no better, the selfishness of self to be denied.

ii. And so to follow Christ. I said that self produced the Fall. And that the Fall made the occasion for the Cross. It might be concluded well from this, that the triumph of the Cross would be the sacrifice of self. And so it was. Hold to the light the spotless character of Christ, and see how perfectly transparent, and dispossessed of self. When He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, He was found in fashion as a man. When He was rich, for our sake He became poor. He had not a home on the earth which He had

made. Was there one of the companions of His choice that did not forsake Him and flee? Even from the blessed bosom of His Virgin Mother, did He not tear Himself away, to spend His life in ministries of love? And was not His death the sharpest sword to pierce her tender love? So true it is, that to deny self is to follow Christ. Self strangles love. Self takes the wings from faith. Self dwindles piety. Self crowds out holiness. The latest conquest of the Cross is self-denial. And when self is conquered, and cast out, God enters in and dwells with man.

III. But the self-conqueror must not withhold his very life, for Christ's sake and the Gospel's. "For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it." And is not this the rule with men? What less than life is the accepted test of courage? Who has not read the touching struggle, between Pythias and Damon? How many a mother has caught in her own heart, the shaft intended for her child? Instinctive argument of immortality! Transcendent triumph of the real and eternal, over the accidental and the perishable! Noble, when human love can overcome death. Noble, when truth can smile at life; and drain the hemlock draught, with Socrates. Noblest, when childlike souls, despised of men, but chosen of Christ, content themselves to live a dying life, martyrs of toil, of poverty, of suffering, of bonds, of shame,—of all but death, which would release and crown them—

that mourners may be comforted, and weak ones strengthened, and sinners saved, and God be glorified in Jesus Christ His Son.

Beloved, is there power in man to save his life? Can utmost skill, can utmost care, preserve it, for one hour, when He, who gave, recalls it? A fever maddens, or a palsy chills. A wheel is broken, or a ship goes down. A gun goes off untimely, or a needle wounds a nerve. But one way into life; ten thousand out of it; how vain the hope of man to save it! But go to Him in the simpleness of a weaned child. Take in your hand your will, your self, your life. Say, "I am thine; Oh save me; I will keep thy commandments." And in the mere word, is all the deed. Your life hid with Christ, in God. Trials, troubles, sorrows, all that is evil of the earth and time will float below it, in its serene serenity, like clouds below Mont Blanc. And when He shall appear, you also, shall appear with Him in His glory." "Whosoever shall lose his life, for My sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it."

Dearly beloved, there are no such errors as men fall into, in estimating life. The life that has to die is no life; but a death deferred. Eden became a grave-yard at the Fall. The three-score years and ten are but a mere protracted funeral. The royal purple, the plumed helmet, the bridal wreath of orange blossoms, are but gayer grave-clothes. The pride and pomp and circumstance of life, only a parti-coloured pall, to hide the coffin and set off the hearse. We do but die through life; and each revolving year is but a narrowing circle

in the whirlpool of the grave. How strange that men should cling to such a shadow; and esteem it life. Should clasp a cloud, for heaven. Should pitch their tents beside a broken cistern; when the fountain with the palm-trees is almost in sight! Should hug an earthen pitcher; when the well of life was opened for them, on the Cross! And, yet, these very men are you, who hear me now. And the Saviour cries the while in all your ears, and in so many cries in vain: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him, a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." Lord, give us ears to hear, and hearts to feel, and feet to run to Thee: "for with Thee is the fountain of life: and in Thy light shall we see light."

SERMON XXVI.

Easter-Day.

THE JOY OF EASTER.

THE high festivals of our religion are Christmas and Easter-Day. Both of them joyful days to every Christian heart: but, “with a difference,” as poor Ophelia wore her rue. The joy of Christmas is a cheerful joy. It is the joy of children at their sports. Our Easter joy is thoughtful: as, of those who have been children, but are men and women, now. The dew of Christmas is the morning dew, that sparkles in the sun. The Easter dews fall in the twilight; and have caught a shade of soberness. The dawn of Christmas takes us to our children in their cradles. But when Easter comes, we seek them in their little graves, the cradles of their immortality.

As the Nativity of Jesus and His resurrection were both required for our redemption, so the joy of the redeemed must still be mingled, of the hopes of Christmas and the memories of Easter. To compare them, in their joyousness, were difficult: would not be just. They have their several offices and several issues. Were

there no coffins in the world, the joy of Christmas would suffice for us. To be ever children. To be ever hopeful. To be ever happy. No elegy, no dirge, no requiem, in all our ears : because no death-wound in our hearts. Our music, Angels' music. Its key-note what the shepherds caught at Bethlehem : "Glory to God, in the highest, and, on earth, peace : good-will toward men." But since a coffin comes from every tree that yields a cradle, and, to every human birth, a death belongs : we have scarce shaken from our brows the dews of childhood, before the thoughtful joy of Easter, wakes its echo in our hearts. And we unconsciously take up the Easter Hymns, which sing of death as well as life ; and life through death : "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more. Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept."

"Made like Him, like Him we rise :
Ours the *Cross*, the *grave*, the *skies*."

i. *The joy of Easter stands beside the Cross.* But for Good Friday, Easter had not been. The blood, which bore the life of Jesus out with it, restored us, ours. The joy of Easter, is the joy of ransomed sinners. It mingles with the memories of Egypt, of the brick-kiln, of the task. And it has blood upon it, as the token and the price of its release. The light of Easter, should come to us through tears. Tears, for the sufferings of Jesus. Tears, for the sins, for which He suffered. Tears of repentance. Tears of affection. Tears of devotion. Sweet tears : such as fond ones love to

kiss from the eyes of their beloved : when the moment which April had clouded, is brightened again, through its showers. Such tears, as hers, who washed with them those blessed feet, and wiped them with her hairs : that she might bathe them with the balm which was the tribute and the token of her love. The Christian joy of Easter is her joy—"her sins, which are many, are forgiven." The Easter joy of Christians is her joy—"thy faith hath saved thee : go in peace."

ii. *The joy of Easter nestles in the grave.* It teaches us, to see it, as it is. It makes a sunshine, in its shady place. We see where Jesus lay. The linen clothes are there, to be our grave-clothes. The fragrance of the spices and the ointments still is there, which loving women brought, for the anointing of His body. Look at it steadily, in the clear light of Easter : and what is it ? No place of doubt. No place of fear. No prison-house. No purgatorial fire. If we have walked with Jesus, we but rest with Him. If we have toiled as Jesus did, we do but sleep where He slept. If we have borne His Cross, we do but leave it, where He left it. It is the gate through which he passed into Paradise. And, if we have followed Him in life, we shall but go after Him, in death, to the green pastures, where He refreshed Himself, from Calvary : and to the still waters, where He found comfort from the Cross.

iii. *The joy of Easter triumphs in the skies.* Thither, the Crucified and Risen, for us, has, now, returned in glory. And there He waits to welcome His redeemed, who die, and rise with Him.

The Banner, where the Cross is blazoned, bears also this inscription, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." And the Easter Sermon of St. Paul the Apostle, to the Thessalonians, is this: "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others, which have no hope. For, if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with Him." "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then, we, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them, in the clouds, to meet the Lord, in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

But, be not self-deceivers in your comfort, my beloved. Not every grave lies open to the skies. Not all that die shall enter into heaven. For that, no Easter had been needed, no Good Friday. The curse that lies upon our race, yields only to the Cross. And, only to the Cross, to them, that take it to their hearts, and bear it in their lives. Only to them, to whom, to live is Christ, to die, is gain. Only to them, who sleep in Jesus, is it permitted to rise with Him, and be with Him in glory. None, but ourselves, can live our lives. None, but ourselves, can die our deaths. We shall each stand up, alone, in all that marvellous multitude. Upon each, as if he were the only one, the eye, that turned and looked on Peter, will then turn, and look.

Oh, for the fearfulness of them, on whom that eye shall fix its frown! Oh, for the joyfulness of them, on whom that eye shall shed its smile! Come to Him, now, beloved, that you may be with Him, then, forever. Cling to His Cross to-day, that through eternity you may wear His Crown. He is here, as He promised to be in its commemoration. He is here, to the tears of the penitent. He is here, to the vows of the faithful. He is here, to the hearts of the loving. Come, now, and own Him on His Cross. Come, now, and feed on His life. Come, now, and hide yourselves in His love. For your sins, bring true repentance. For your pardon, bring an unreserving faith. For His sufferings, bring your love, to Him, and your lives. Why should there be one of us, for whom He shed His blood in vain? Why should there be one of us, for whom He did not rise? Why should the Cross not shelter us all from death? Why should not the grave be for all of us the gate of everlasting life

SERMON XXVII.

Easter.

THE GLORY OF EASTER.

“THIS is the day which the Lord hath made”—illustrious by the wonders which it witnessed, blessed for the benefits which it hath revealed, glorious in the holiness with which it is invested—“we will rejoice and be glad in it” forever.

I. *Illustrious by the wonders which it witnessed.* “This is the day which the Lord hath made.” For a time, the powers of darkness had their hour. The Just One was betrayed. The innocent falsely accused. The unresisting bound, and buffeted, and scourged. The Lord of Life delivered unto death. We followed at a distance. We saw the sacred Victim. We saw the Cross. We saw the struggling, uncomplaining Lamb. We saw no more. There was darkness over all the land. The earth reeled. The rocks were riven in sunder. The graves opened. The body of the Saviour was taken down from the Cross. It was laid in a new tomb in the very heart of a hard rock. A great stone

closed its mouth. The stone was sealed. The seal was guarded by a band of armed men. It is the Sabbath-rest in Israel. Night closes in on day. Day breaks again on night. It is the third day's dawn. There are some there before it. Love antedates the light. The holy women, "last at the Cross and earliest at the grave," while it is dark, are there. The stone is rolled away. The sepulchre is open. The grave-clothes are all there. But where is the body of the Lord? They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him—"And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold two men stood by them in shining garments; and as they were afraid, and bowed their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen." "The Lord is risen, the Lord is risen indeed." Illustrious for the wonders which it witnessed, this is the day which the Lord hath made.

II. And He hath made it *blessed for the benefits which it revealed*. Christ did not rise alone. "If we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." From the dark pit wherein there is no water, the captive is released. To the prisoners of hope freedom is now proclaimed. "Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." As the first fruits, so shall the harvest be. Blessed for the benefits which it reveals, this is the day which the Lord hath made.

III. He hath made it, moreover, *glorious in the holiness with which it is invested*. From the time of Christ's resurrection, the first day of the week has ever been kept holy. It was on the first day of the week that He arose. It was on the first day of the week that He appeared first to His disciples after His resurrection. It was on the first day of the week that the Holy Ghost descended visibly on the Apostles. It was on the first day of the week that the disciples in all the Apostolic age assembled to break bread. The first day of the week has still been, through the ages all along, the day of Christian rest and spiritual refreshment. It is the first day of the week, which is gathering now in every land, the faithful in Christ Jesus, to the house of prayer. Glorious in the holiness with which it is invested, this is the day which the Lord hath made.

"This is the day which the Lord hath made," illustrious for its wonders, blessed for its benefits, glorious for its holiness, the festival of our Lord's resurrection; "we will rejoice and be glad in it," because it asserts His divinity; because it establishes His Atonement; because it confirms our hope of immortality.

i. "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it," because it *asserts His divinity*. Such is St. Paul's conclusion: "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Deny this inference, and you destroy the grounds of faith, and set aside the government of God. For Jesus Christ claimed to be the Son of God. To the blind

man whose eyes He opened, He said, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The blind man asked, "Who is he, Lord?" Jesus replied, "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee." More than this, He claimed that He was God. "I and the Father are one." And such the Jews considered His claim to be the Son of God; for, says the Evangelist, "they sought to kill Him, because He had not only broken the Sabbath, but said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God." In confirmation of this claim, He wrought miracles; which no man can do unless God be with him. And to sum all up in one, He told the Jews who asked a proof that He was what He claimed to be, "Destroy this temple"—He spake, St. John informs us, of the temple of His body—"and I will raise it up in three days." It came to pass, as He had often said it would. He was crucified, dead, and buried. Now, let it be that He was not what He asserted that He was. Will God protect imposture? Will God give countenance to blasphemy? Will God raise Him up from the dead, who impiously claims the Godhead? Most certainly, if Jesus Christ had not been God, that garden tomb had closed on Him forever; the name of Christian never had been known. And neither you nor I had hailed this as the day the Lord hath made, that we should joy in it forever.

ii. "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it," *because it certifies to the atonement.* It was the primal sentence on all sin, "without shedding of blood, there is no remission."

But of what blood? Not that of beasts. For says St. Paul, "it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin." Not human blood—"No man," the Psalmist says, "may deliver his brother, nor make atonement unto God for him, for it cost more to redeem their souls." What then? Was man to perish in his sins? Was there no hope of favour? No possibility of pardon? Hear what the Gospel says. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." Upon the Cross He gave Himself a ransom for the race: and, by His resurrection from the dead, the acceptance of His ransom is perfectly attested. "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

iii. "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it," for *it confirms our hope of immortality*. If in this life only we had hope, we were of all men most miserable. To grope our way, along the darkling path of life; to bear, as best we may, its crosses and its cares; to drop, at every stage, some cherished darling of the heart; and when life's weary pilgrimage were past, to lay us down, and die without a hope, beyond the grave: it is from this, that we are rescued, by the event which we commemorate, with Christendom, to-day. For, "now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For, as in Adam all die, even so in Christ, shall all be made alive."

There is a temple, high and lifted up. In the dim

distance, we descry a multitude approaching it. We catch the glancing of their bright array. We scarcely hear the murmur of their choral song. It is the Saviour, and His white-robed train. The gates of heaven unfold, self-opened, to receive them. They enter in. The "loud uplifted angel trumpets" bid them welcome. "The Seraphim, in burning row" cast down their crowns before Him. Death has been swallowed up in victory. The kingdom is delivered up unto the Father. And God is all in all.

Is there a place for us, dear brethren, in that white-robed train? Shall we lift up our voices in that song, forever new? Shall we have entrance through those gates of living gold? Not unless we put away our sins from us by repentance. Not unless we cast our care in simple faith upon the Cross. Not unless we follow after holiness. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple."

SERMON XXVIII.

Easter.

THE COMFORT OF EASTER.

EASTER-DAY is rising day. The East is the place of rising. The sun rises in the East. The Sun of Righteousness rose in the East. The expectation of all Christendom turns eastward for the coming of the Judge. Hence, everywhere, the dead are buried with their feet toward the East, that when the Resurrection breaks, they may arise, and meet its dawning. And hence, Christians in every land turn eastward when they make profession of their faith in the old Creeds; and when they ascribe all glory to the Three in One, in that ancient condensation of the Creeds, the *Gloria Patri*. Easter is rising. The rising of the Crucified, Who died for our Salvation; our rising to meet the Crucified, when He shall come again in glory, to accomplish the redemption of His faithful.

“It is Easter, beautiful Easter. The time, in all the year, when Nature’s types most clearly shadow forth the realities of the Christian dispensation. For the first butterfly has burst from its grave-clothes, and is

gone up towards heaven in the light of this season ; and, look, a thousand blossoms hang on branches, that were to all appearance, dead last week. Nay, that but a fortnight ago, were bending beneath a heavy load of snow. And see how the chestnut buds, wrapped up, as they were, by God's own hand, with art inimitable, fold within fold, have heard the Voice of God in the garden, and burst their cerements, and sprung forth in beauty, exulting in the life He has renewed to them. And the primroses too are up, round the foot of the old Cross, and the daisies, and the cuckoo-flowers are awake ; and rising out of their graves, under every hedge, tell their tale, of hope and the Resurrection."

How beautiful is Easter ! The very name is beautiful. It glides through the ear as if it might be a household word in Heaven. And then its sense is beautiful. For it means *rising*. And rising always pleases. The upward arrow. The towering spire. The tapering palm. The very grass, as it shoots upward here, among our graves. The spark of the divine, which is not yet extinguished in us, is ever struggling heavenward toward its source. And upward motion always pleases. *How beautiful is Easter !* We were, but two days since, with Mary at the Cross ; and yesterday we sat in silence at the sepulchre. It was a still, sad, solemn day. And yet in its solemnity, so touching and so tender. It is the day of all the year to commune with our own hearts, and be still. It is the day when tears are nearest to the eye ; and flow the freeliest. For the departed are not with us, and

we love to weep upon their graves and wet them ; and leave them greener than we found them. But, now, to-day, before the dawn, we went with loving women, that would do for the Buried One what the wise men did for the Just Born, and bring sweet spices to embalm their love in Him. And, when we reached the place, there was an Angel, there ; but He was gone. And instantly there was a cry, " The Lord has risen, as He said, and has appeared unto Peter ! " And still, on every blessed Easter-Day, the cry prevents the dawn. The Christ is risen. The Christ is risen indeed. And circling all the world, the joyous refrain meets the rising sun. The Christ *is* risen. The Christ is risen indeed. *How beautiful is Easter !*

And *how comforting is Easter !* By every house, there is a grave. At every hearth there is one dead. The world is one vast Egypt. There are weeping Rachels under every palm-tree. Who has not looked on death ? Who has not felt its long, cold, creeping shadow, as it darkened on some dear one's face ? Who has not heard that doleful knell of our humanity, which rings out from the coffin lid, when earth is given to earth ? Not even the stars in heaven can number with the sepulchres of earth. And were the tears, that have been shed on tombs, all gathered into one sad flood, the sea would float the ark. Ages and ages of thick darkness overspread the world. Generation followed generation to the grave. It was all gloom and silence and despair. Humanity was hopeless in its death. There was a new tomb made in a garden, of a living rock.

The body of one crucified was laid in it. On the third day, He arose. Rock, seal, and guard were all in vain. He rose, and from that Sepulchre of stone, the cry has come, which conquers death, and overmasters agony ; “I am the Resurrection and the Life.” And now the dead lie down in hope. And now the childless mother dries her tears. And now there is a light in every Christian grave. And now from every Christian grave a voice arises to console and cheer the mourners, as they sit in silence by their darkened hearth, or blend their tears on the deserted cradle ; and bids them sorrow not as others which have no hope ; since Christ has risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. *How comforting is Easter !*

And *how glorious is Easter !* Wickedness had had its way. The Innocent had been betrayed, and crucified, and killed. It was the hour and power of darkness. “We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.” Alas, the grave, that disappoints our hope ! But, see ! The gray just opens into gold, upon the Eastern hills. There is an earthquake. The Angel of the Lord comes down from heaven. His countenance is like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. For fear of him the keepers do shake, and are as dead men. He rolls the stone back. He sits upon it. There is joy among the Angels. There is glory for the world. For, to the weeping women that were there before him, he says, “Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was cru-

cified. He is not here, for He is risen as He said. *How glorious is Easter !*

And the Crucified Who rose and has returned to heaven, is once to come again. At the sound of His approaching footsteps every grave shall open : as did some when He was crucified. From a thousand valleys and from ten thousand hill-sides, the sound of shaking shall be heard. Like the bursting grass in Spring, the buried shall break forth. The aged shall come up, renewed in youth. The Mother shall collect her children by her side. And that fair girl shall be there, with her grave flowers in her hand ; herself a fairer and immortal flower ; and we and all our buried darlings who have slept in Jesus shall be forever with the Lord. *How glorious is Easter !*

Oh, that I need not add, *how terrible is Easter !* But I must. There will be those for whom the Lord is risen in vain ; who see no beauty in His resurrection ; who feel no comfort in His resurrection : who own no glory in His resurrection. For them, *how terrible that Easter !*

Great God, what do I see and hear ;

The end of things created :

The Judge of Man I see appear

On clouds of glory seated.

The trumpet sounds, the graves restore

The dead which they contained before.

Prepare my soul to meet Him.

The dead in Christ shall first arise

At the last trumpet's sounding ;

Caught up to meet Him, in the skies,
With joy their Lord surrounding :
No gloomy fears their souls dismay,
His presence sheds eternal day,
On those prepared to meet Him.
But sinners filled with guilty fears,
Behold His wrath prevailing ;
For they shall rise and find their tears
And sighs are unavailing.
The day of grace is past and gone,
Trembling they stand before His throne,
All unprepared to meet Him !

Beloved, while the day of grace still shines, prepare to meet your Saviour, when He comes to be your Judge. Come to Him now, upon His holy day, this beautiful, this comforting, this glorious Easter, the memory of His resurrection, and the token of your own, rise from the grave of sin, burst through the cerements of the flesh, shake off the dust of earth, and bring your hearts and lives to Him. Achieve, to-day, in penitence and faith, that resurrection of your nature, which He purchased for you on the Cross; and in the power of the divine and gracious Spirit, renew your souls in righteousness and holiness, the foretaste and the preparation of the life beyond the grave. Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more. Death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin, once. But, in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SERMON XXIX.

The Great Forty Days.

THE WAITING OF THE CHURCH.

ACTS I. 4.—Wait for the promise of the Father.

ST. PETER sublimely says, “one day is with the Lord, as a thousand years; and a thousand years, as one day.” And Moses, more sublimely, still: “And God said, Let there be light, and there was light.” And, yet, six days were taken up with the creation of the world. And, when the new creation was completed, in Christ Jesus, and He had gone to Heaven, again, there were ten days of waiting, for the promise of the Father, before its blessings and its glories were revealed.

“Ten days, th’ eternal doors displayed,
Were wondering, (so th’ Almighty bade,)
Whom Love, enthroned, would send, in aid
Of souls that mourn;
Left orphans, in Earth’s dreary shade,
As soon as born.”

To me, this seems the most sublime of all: the waiting of the Omnipotent. That the Eternal should

use time. That, when light was instantaneous, the stars were only finished, in four days. That, when the heat of one fierce flash might ripen all the corn, it should be done, through gradual weeks. That, the Crucified should be among the dead, three days. That, the Risen should stay forty days, on earth. That the Ascended should withhold the Comforter, ten days. Surely in this self-restraint of the Almighty, sublimity is most sublime. The patience of the Eternal ! As St. Augustine grandly argued : “patient, because He is eternal. For a thousand years, in Thy sight, are but as yesterday, when it is past.”

A living divine of the Church of England, at once its ornament and its defence, has written a book, (which I do wish you all could read,) which he calls “The great Forty Days.” Its subject is the teachings and the acts of Jesus, during the period which He spent with the Apostles, between His Resurrection and His Ascension, “to whom,” St. Luke says, “He shewed Himself alive, after His passion, by many infallible proofs ; being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” The ten succeeding days, though, of a different, are scarcely of inferior, interest. The orphanage of the disciples. The waiting of the Church. “I will not leave you comfortless,” He said in one place ; where in the margin of your Bibles, you will find “orphans.” And, then, in the context, “being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father.” The course of the Chris-

tian year, has once more brought us to the period of that strange, mysterious, interval. We shall be better fitted for the thankful joys of Whitsunday, with its most gracious gifts, if we attempt to realize these thoughts: the orphanage of the disciples; the waiting of the Church. It is the lesson of the admirable Collect, for this day, "O God the King of glory, who hast exalted Thine only Son, Jesus Christ, with great triumph, unto Thy kingdom in Heaven, we beseech Thee, leave us not comfortless; but send to us Thine Holy Ghost, to comfort us, and exalt us to the same place whither our Saviour Christ is gone before, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen."

The orphanage of the disciples. "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." How apt and beautiful the word! Who has not lost a darling? It may be death; it may be distance, only, that divides two hearts, whom love has knit, and sympathy made one. How the light of life is darkened! How beauty has faded from the beautiful. What an oppressive loneliness! What a dissolving of the heart! What a lostness! It is the very sense of orphanage. How it haunts us everywhere! How it wakes with us in the morning! How nature sympathises with it. How it comes with the shadow of a familiar tree. Or with a snatch of a remembered song. Or with the carol of a bird. Or with the fragrance of a flower. Or with nothing but a tender recollection, when the heart floats up into the eye. It is what children call home-sickness.

It is the sense of orphanage. Its most expressive epithet is "comfortless." "I will not leave you comfortless." How it must have weighed on the hearts of the disciples! He had been with them so lovingly. They had leaned so upon His arm. They had lingered so upon His voice. They had lived so upon His looks. And, then, His sufferings had so endeared Him, to them. And their hearts had been melted so, by the sorrows of His cross. And, when they had scarcely lost Him, from their love, He had been restored to them, so marvellously. And, now, when they had begun to live upon the hope of His continuance with them, He had been taken from them, forever. "And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven;" "and a cloud received Him out of their sight."

How sad and solemn the procession of these orphans of the Cross, as they turned homeward from their parting with the Lord. And how touching the simplicity of Scripture, which, in the fewest and the plainest words, says that, to which all language is inadequate, "Then returned they unto Jerusalem, from the mount called Olivet, which is, from Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of

James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren."

The waiting of the Church. They knew not what they were to have. They knew not when it was to come. They were left, simply, to their faith. But they knew that He was faithful, who had promised. And so, they waited. They waited with one accord. They waited with one accord in prayer and supplication. *They waited.* It was His bidding. And they did it. But how hard it must have been to do! Waiting is always hard. Harder than working, or than fighting. For, resistance stirs the blood. Exertion occupies the mind. But, just, to wait. And, still, to wait. And to wait, still. There is but faith that *can* do that. And faith is not of flesh. It is the gift of God. How much they needed it! None, ever, more. How richly it was given! It always is, to them who will receive. "Lord increase *our* faith." *They waited, with one accord.* They had been drawn together by a common love. They had been knit together by a common loss. There is no partnership so close as that of sorrow. And theirs was a sacred sorrow; and so, closer, still. What scene more touching can be thought of, than that little company of sheep without a shepherd! The upper room, which He had consecrated, by His presence, their only refuge. The whole world bent on their destruction. Wolves at their very door. And they, some simple fishermen and a publican; "with the women, and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and

His brethren." But the Son of Peace was with them, and made them of one heart. And, in their mutual love, they were happy, though they were helpless. And, yet, they were not helpless. They had help of God. For *they united, with one accord, in prayer and supplication*. No matter, if the world was bent on their destruction. No matter, if the wolves are at their very door. In the serenity of that still chamber, they were secure from every harm: their helplessness, omnipotent in prayer. There, as in another ark, the Church of God was sheltered. No matter, how the floods might swell. No matter, how the winds might roar. No matter, how the storms might fall. Upon His promise, "I will not leave you comfortless," their hearts were stayed, in perfect peace. Upon the blackest cloud, they knew, the bow would spring; and, through the fiercest tempest, the heavenly Dove come down. And it was so. They did but wait, and love, and pray. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from Heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

"When God, of old, came down from Heaven,
In power and wrath, He came;
Before His feet the clouds were riven,
Half darkness and half flame:

"Around the trembling mountain's base,
The prostrate people lay;

A day of wrath, and not of grace ;
A dim and dreadful day.

“ But, when He came the second time,
He came in power and love ;
Softer than gale at morning prime,
Hovered His holy Dove.

“ The fires that rushed, on Sinai, down,
In sudden torrents, dread,
Now, gently light, a glorious crown
On every sainted head.

“ Like arrows, went those lightnings forth,
Wing'd with the sinner's doom ;
But then, like tongues, o'er all the earth,
Proclaiming life, to come.”

We stand, midway between the Ascension and the Pentecost. On Thursday, we commemorated, with the Church throughout all the world, the Coronation of the Crucified. On Sunday, we are to celebrate the glorious redemption of His parting promise, in the descent of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. These are not fictions; but eternal facts. Not pageants; but sublime realities. Not human doings; but the acts of God. The Ascension vindicated the absolute divinity of the Incarnate Saviour, and, in His human nature, crowned Him King of Heaven. On Whitsunday, He perfectly accomplished His gracious work, in our Redemption, by sending down, as He had promised, the Holy Spirit, to be the Comforter and Sanctifier of the faithful. We cannot be the Orphans of the Cross, as they, who gathered, in that

upper room, through those mysterious ten days. Nor, has the Church now to wait, until the day of Pentecost has fully come, to receive the promise of the Father. And yet, the Ten Days have their use for us ; and the orphanage of the disciples, and the waiting of the Church, are not without their lesson, for our hearts. The Collect for the day most beautifully instructs us, what it is. It first sets forth, in words, that well befit their subject, the magnificence of the Ascension. " O God, the King of glory, who hast exalted Thine only Son, Jesus Christ, with great triumph unto Thy kingdom in heaven." And there it puts us in the very place of them, who watched the trailing glories of that cloud, which stooped from heaven, to be His chariot, and bids us pray, with them : " We beseech Thee, leave us not comfortless ; but send to us Thine Holy Ghost, to comfort us, and exalt us into the same place, whither our Saviour Christ is gone before." The lesson of these words is urgent and impressive, if we will receive them. They teach us, that salvation does not come of course, even to Christian men. That, not the crucifixion of the Lord of Glory will suffice for it ; nor yet, His Resurrection and Ascension ; nor, even the coming of the Holy Ghost. That we may still be orphans ; and, so, comfortless. That we shall be, in the midst of all the glories and of all the graces of the Pentecost, unless His coming be to us, specifically and individually. That, though the race has been redeemed, the man must still be judged ; and may be lost. That, it is one thing to be called and elected, as all are in holy baptism, and quite

another, to make that calling and election sure. And that, without personal sanctification, there can be no personal salvation.

“Come, Holy Ghost, Creator come,
Inspire these souls of Thine ;
Till every heart, which Thou hast made,
Be filled with grace divine.”

SERMON XXX.

Holy Thursday.

THE ASCENSION.

ACTS I. 9.—And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

PSALM LXVIII. 18.—Thou hast ascended on high.

THE Ascension of Jesus Christ, the topic of the season, is an article of the Christian faith. It is declared in both the Creeds. He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. Is it not so, with the free consent of every heart? Is it not so, by the very instinct of a loving nature? We see the Son of God made man. We are spectators of the shame and suffering which, for our sakes, He endures. We trace, in tears and blood, the pathway of His sacred feet. We follow Him to the Hall of Judgment, to the Cross, and to the grave. And do we leave Him there? No, God forbid! His soul could not remain in hell. Jehovah's Holy One could never see corruption. On the third day, He rises, as He said; and, being raised, dieth no more.—And is this all? Is there no more, for grat-

itude? Is there no more, for justice? Is it on earth, and among sinful men, that His incarnate, suffering, dying love is to receive its final crown? No, God forbid! Suffering for us as man, it is His privilege to bear up, into heaven, the suffering nature, which He bore on earth. Ancient types prefigured it. It was foretold in solemn prophecies. He Himself declared it. "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God and your God." And it was so. Forty days from His resurrection, He spent with His Apostles, speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. These ended, He assembled them, for the last time. He reminded them of the promise of the Father, and directed them to wait, for its accomplishment. The world would then be all before them: and in the power of the imparted Spirit, they were to go, and bear Him witness, in a line that never should be broken, to the uttermost parts of the earth, and to the end of time. There was no more for Him to do. He had died for the sins of men. He had risen for their justification. He had established the Church, as the way of Salvation. He had sent Apostles out, and their successors, to gather men into it by baptism, and to preach the Gospel, in it, to every creature. What remained of His Mediatorial office, the effusion of the Spirit, the work of intercession, He would do in heaven. "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." And again, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather,

that is risen again; who is ever at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us.”—Sad and solemn was the parting interview. It was on the Mountain Olivet, the sacred haunt of Jesus, that He parted from His chosen few. While He was speaking to them yet, and their ears drank in His gracious words, and their eyes were fixed upon His glorious beauty, He was uplifted from among them. They would have clung to Him, but could not reach Him. They would have called to Him, but wonder fettered every tongue. They would have followed, with the doting gaze of love, His upward track, but that a cloud swept by, and hid Him from their eyes. “And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”

With strange sublimity, does royal David speak, beforehand, in his eight and sixtieth Psalm, of this, the glorious ascension of our risen Lord. “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels. The Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious, also, that the Lord God might dwell among them. Blessed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our Salvation.” The Conqueror is Jesus. The chariots are His ministering Angels, that escort Him home. The enemies, which He leads captive, are sin and death and hell. For a time, they had their hour. He seemed to yield, that He might triumph, the more gloriously. He died, that

through death, He might destroy him that had the power of death. His gifts are Spiritual, the Holy Ghost whom He provided for us, with all His train of graces, and the means and miracles through which it pleases Him to shed them down upon the world of sinners, through the medium of His holy Church. Nor did he leave us, even so. He follows still His heavenly gifts, with His prevailing prayers; forever living, to intercede for sinners.

We have now closed and crowned, with all the holy Church through the world, our annual memorial of the incarnation of the Son of God. Good Friday, Easter Day, the Ascension; the Cross, the grave, the clouds: behold the pathway of the Saviour; behold their track, who would be followers of Him. They must be crucified with Christ. They must be risen with Him. They must seek those things which are above.

They must be crucified with Christ. To carnal ears this seems too strong a word. It is a hard saying; who can hear it? But Christ was crucified for us, and that without a figure: nailed to the Cross, pierced with a spear, His heart's blood shed. Is it more that we, the guilty, should be crucified with Him, than that He, the Innocent, should be crucified for us? Ah, brethren, our self-complacency, our self-indulgence, our self-justification prevent our looking at the truth. We do not wish to see it. We are not willing to hear of it. We are determined not to do it. Meanwhile, what saith the Lord? "The wages of sin is death."

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” “Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil.” Ah, brethren, these are solemn truths. God has proclaimed them. They stand written in His book. Our daily life is passed under their curse. We die, to find them true and real. There is but one escape. As the love of God provided no deliverance but one from sin and death, the Cross and Passion of His Son, so now His justice suffers none to be partakers of that rescue, but such as die with Him. To be partakers of His glory, we must go to it as He did, through humiliation. To enter into life, we must pass, as He did, through the grave. “Mortify, therefore, your members that are on the earth.” “If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live.” They that are Christ’s have crucified the world, with the affections and lusts.

Again, they must be risen with Christ, that would be followers of Him. Christ stayed not on the Cross. Christ stayed not in the grave. It were not more in the counsels of the Godhead, that the Son should die, than that He should rise again. “Thus it is written,” He says, “and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day.” As with the Head, so with the members. He left us an example, to follow in His steps. “What shall we say then,” says the fervent Paul; “shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Know ye not

that so many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized unto His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism unto death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." "Remembering always," says the faithful Church, "that baptism doth represent unto us our profession; which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him, that, as He died and rose again for us, so should we who are baptized, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness; continually mortifying our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living."

Nor is it yet enough that we be risen with Christ. He stayed not here on earth. His Spirit yearned for the full bliss of that dear bosom, which He left, to bear our sins. As He came down from heaven to do His Father's will, so when that gracious will was done, and He had finished all His work, did He return to heaven again. Nor for Himself alone, but for our sakes, that He might draw us thus to Him. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our

infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need." "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." "Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that like as we do believe Thy only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to have ascended into the heavens; so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with Him continually dwell, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end."

Dear brethren, that it may be so, that our hearts may mount up with wings as eagles towards the holy mountain of our God, the interceding Saviour stoops to meet us here on earth. He gives Himself to us again, to be the food and strength of our immortal souls. On Sunday next, all Christendom will keep the holy Pentecostal feast. It is the day when our dear Lord especially fulfils His promise to be ever with His Church. Upon ten thousand altars He renews the great commemorative sacrifice. Upon ten thousand altars He presents the tokens of His broken body. Upon ten thousand altars will the cup be poured anew which sheds on faithful hearts the cleansing unction of His blood. Beside ten thousand altars stand the ministering servants, who renew in His dread name the

covenant of grace. Before ten thousand altars kneeling multitudes will take, with streaming tears, the sign of their salvation. Brethren, dear brethren, let it not be vainly for your souls. Let not the blessed Jesus still be lifted up, and ye not drawn to Him. Let not the yearning love, which through the Cross beseeches you to come, still agonize in vain. But now while all the courts of heaven resound with nobler song, now while the holy Church throughout the world takes up their strain, now while the Anthem that swells every burning tongue of Seraph and of saint, is still the same which David woke, ages long past, from his prophetic harp—"Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in!"—let every ransomed heart prepare a throne for His reception; receive Him now by humble faith; embrace Him now with fervent love; follow Him now in glad obedience. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" "Even so come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" And to Thee, one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, shall be evermore ascribed the glory and the praise.

SERMON XXXI.

Whitsunday.

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

ACTS II. 33.—Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received, of the Father, the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

JESUS CHRIST, ascending into heaven, leading captive captivity, and receiving, for His ransomed, glorious, spiritual gifts, was the last subject of consideration, here. To-day, we celebrate, with all the holy Apostolic Church, the communication of the gifts, which He then received; and the consummation of the victory, which He then accomplished: “for, being, by the right hand of God, exalted, and having received, of the Father, the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.”

It was the day of Pentecost; the fiftieth from His resurrection, and the tenth after His ascension into Heaven. The disciples, as, for nine days, they had been, were all, with one accord, in one place. “And, suddenly, there came a sound, from heaven, as of a

rushing mighty wind ; and it filled all the house, where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire ; and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost ; and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." What candid mind would doubt as to the source of these phenomena ? The rushing mighty wind, the cloven flames of fire might be explained, perhaps, by natural agencies ; by magnetism or electricity. But no one, that has ever tried the acquisition of one foreign language, with all the best appliances to aid ; no mother, that has marked how slowly, and with what stammering tongue, her first born mastered the few broken words, which were such music to her heart, will claim that natural agencies could solve that wondrous gift of tongues. What greater intellectual phenomenon was ever witnessed, than when men, untaught in any language but their own, spoke out, at once, and perfectly, in all the languages of earth ? How could it be, that Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, dwellers in Mesopotamia, and Judea and Cappadocia, strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, could understand illiterate Galileans, when they spoke, in all their varied dialects, the wonderful works of God ?

That was strange hardihood, which, in the light of this resplendent miracle, could charge its marvellous utterances as the mere gibberish of drunkenness. And overwhelming the reproof with which St. Peter met the absurd and impious calumny, not only indignantly

refuting it; but proclaiming Him, whom they with wicked hands had crucified, to be their true Messiah; proving to them, that not His resurrection only, but the strange wonders then displayed, were promised, long before, by their own prophets; and asserting fearlessly that the Spirit then poured out on His disciples was, at once, the redemption of His promise of the Comforter, and the attestation of His own return to His eternal glory: "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ;" who, "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, hath shed forth this, which ye, now, see and hear." And the truth and power of that first Gospel sermon were shown forth in this, that it secured three thousand converts to the name and faith of Christ.

The day of Pentecost, so signally distinguished, by its glories and its gift, has ever been regarded by the Church as of her chiefest and most joyous festivals. In the consideration of two or three of the chief motives to its joy, let us endeavour to improve our Pentecost, to the glory and praise of God, in the sanctification and salvation of men.

First, then, the gift of the Spirit confirmed the reality of the Ascension, and of the truths and hopes which it acknowledges and inspires. It was the evidence, to which He Himself repeatedly appealed. What better proof that He had ascended to His Father, and, that, in all the sufferings of His humanity, and all

the triumphs of His divinity, He had acceptably performed His Father's will, than that He sent to earth such precious gifts, as Heaven alone could furnish? And what more touching proof of His undying love for men, than His remembrance, on His ancient, everlasting throne, of that kind promise, which His humanity had made; and its redemption, to every heart, that should believe in Him, in sending down the Holy Ghost, the Comforter? "If ye love me, keep my commandments; and I will pray the Father: and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever." Blessed, gracious, hopeful, comfortable name; "another Comforter." It were much to promise to our bereaved, broken hearts, if He were human and mortal, like ourselves. What must we not feel, what may we not hope for, and aspire to, in the conviction that our Comforter is deathless and divine!

A second purpose of the miraculous outpouring of the Spirit was the qualification of the Apostles, to complete their Master's work. They were to be His witnesses, to all the world. They were to be the founders of His Church. They were to be, in the preaching of His holy word, and in the ministering of His sacred ordinances, the heralds of His salvation, to all human kind. It might well have seemed, that they, of all men, were least fitted for such an enterprise. Not, merely, that they had the weakness of men, and the ignorance of unlettered men: but that their minds were darkened, and their souls contracted, almost beyond the experience of their kind. Long after they had en-

joyed the divine companionship of Jesus, they continued the very bondslaves of error and prejudice. The precepts of His heavenly wisdom were hard sayings, which they could not hear. The revelations of His pure intelligence were constantly repressed, because they could not bear them. And even to the latest moment of their intercourse with Him, the termination of the Jewish economy, the admission of the Gentiles to the privileges of the Gospel, and the purely spiritual character of the Messiah's reign, were notions, of which they seemed utterly incapable. And were they to restore a rebellious world to holiness and peace? Were such as they to accomplish the conversion of mankind? Is this the sole reliance for the present renovation, the future felicity, the immortal glory of the race? Vain, indeed, if such were to be its Apostles, the hopes which Christianity had inspired. Vain, indeed, if to such were intrusted its interests, the promise of salvation, through the Church. But, the Saviour knew what was in man. On the day of His Ascension, it was His last injunction, that they should not depart from Jerusalem; but wait for the promise of the Father. And it was His parting assurance to them, that they should receive power, after that the Holy Ghost was come upon them; and should be witnesses, to Him, not only in Jerusalem and in Judea, but unto the uttermost part of the earth. With one accord, they waited, in one place, the manifestation of His gift. It came: borne on the sudden sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty, wind; and radiant, in the tongues of cloven

fire. And from that solemn Pentecost, they were as other men. "In surveying," says an eloquent living preacher of the Church of England, "the mark of these dispensations, there is nothing to be found more truly surprising than the strange transformation, which seems to have been wrought in the first preachers of Christianity, subsequently to the Ascension of their divine Master, and the descent of the Holy Spirit. They are like men, suddenly emerged into a new state of existence. Retaining, indeed, their original and indelible varieties of character, they appear, in many essential respects, wholly different persons. They become distinguished by an ardour, an unction, and a boldness, of which, before, we looked, in vain, for any traces. Their carnal prejudices, their low and grovelling hopes, seemed to have been consumed and dissipated, by the intense and concentrated ardour of some nobler principle, within them. Their minds were enlightened, their hearts enlarged, their whole faculties exalted to a spiritual purity and fervour, which denotes their admission to the full and unreserved confidence of Heaven. No longer confounded at the vastness and strangeness of the divine counsels, they are enabled to scan, with a steady, but adoring, eye, the merciful designs of God, in all their wonderful dimensions, and to engage multitudes in the same holy contemplations. Nay, there accompanied their teaching an energy so powerful, as to surpass, in its visible results, the personal ministry of our Lord Himself." Is it possible, let me ask, to account for a change, so wonderful, on any other suppo-

sition than that, which admits the truth of the whole history, in which they were agents so distinguished? Can there be imagined, for such a transformation, an influence other than divine? Only God could thus guide them into all truth. Only He could bring to their remembrance the dark sayings of our Lord; and make them radiant with the light of His unerring wisdom. He alone could convert them into fit agents of that mysterious ministry, to which the work of reconciliation is intrusted.

Finally, in the visible descent of the Spirit, we have the pledge of those ends of the divine grace by which the seeker after truth is to be guided, the aspirant for holiness to be encouraged, the feeble strengthened against temptation, and the sufferer comforted in adversity. There is no honest man who does not own himself unable to ascertain the truths which it concerns him most to know. He will admit that reason, in its boldest flight, takes but a narrow range; while prejudices and passions are ever on the alert to hinder or divert its efforts. The same sincerity will freely own that while adversity has trials of our nature far beyond its strength, the best men often wander from the path of duty which their minds approve. Even the heathen were thus led to covet for the virtuous a guidance and support beyond humanity to furnish. And few are found, if there be one, who, in the fiery trial of temptation, or against the great fight of afflictions, have not deplored the want of some supply, beyond themselves,

of holiness and consolation. In the rich promise of another Comforter, all these desires are met. Upon honest inquiry, humble obedience and patient sorrow, the Holy Spirit will ever pour the blessing which they ask. The divine Comforter comes as the substitute of the departed Saviour, to abide with us forever. In every soul that will submit itself, in purity and charity, to be His temple, He will graciously abide: to illumine it with spiritual light, to fill it with peace and love and joy, to fit it for the holiness of heaven.

Dear brethren, would you receive into your hearts, this Holy Spirit of grace and consolation? Seek it, as they sought it, who received it, first. They waited for it, in faith: tarrying in Jerusalem, until they should be endued with power from on high. They waited for it, in love: being of one heart, and of one soul. They waited for it, in obedience and devotion: continuing steadfast in the Apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Imitate their faith. Emulate their charity. Practise their devotion. It was upon this holy day, that they were with one accord, in one place. It was the Christian prayer, it was the Christian Communion, which filled their hearts, to receive the unction of the Holy One. Fitted for it as they were fitted, seeking it as they sought it, you shall receive it, as they received it. Not, indeed, in the sound of the rushing mighty wind; not, indeed, in the tongue of cloven flame: but, in the gentle breath, which stirs the soul to patient sufferance, and holy resolution;

but, in the genial glow which melts the heart to gratitude, and pours it out in love.

“Come, Lord, come wisdom, Love and Power,

Open our ears, to hear :

Let us not miss the accepted hour ;

Save, Lord, by love, or fear !”

SERMON XXXII.

Whitsuntide.

ACTS II. 1.—The day of Pentecost.

WE keep a feast, to-day, which has been kept, for three and thirty centuries. For almost fifteen hundred years, it was a Jewish festival. For more than eighteen hundred years, the Christian Church has kept it holy. We think of Greece, we think of Rome, as ancient. The feast of Pentecost had been observed, five hundred years, when Homer sung. And, had grown hoary, with the frosts of seven full centuries, when Romulus collected his rude, robber band, beside the yellow Tiber. More than a hundred generations have been garnered in the grave, since its observance was ordained. And, through them all, its observation never, once, has failed. What a solemnity is gathered, thus, about the day! With what sublimity, its just appreciation must impress the soul! We think it long, to the Apostles' times. It is but little more than half the way, to its appointment. We count the Reformation, old. It reaches but a tenth of the whole distance. When we reflect on the shortlivedness of all human things, we must conclude,

that this has come of God. And, when we think how careful He is of His power; that nothing, that He does, is done in vain: we may be sure of some great end, in its observance. In the wilderness, He made the Paschal Lamb, the forecast shadow of the sacrifice of His own Son. In the wilderness, He instituted the Passover, as the perpetual admonition of the Cross. In the wilderness, He ordained the feast of weeks; the shadow cast, before it, by that glorious Pentecost.

And, what a glorious Pentecost, it was! How truly, all that ever went before it, were, as shadows, that creep slowly, in the morning twilight, on the mountain slope! How far does it transcend, in glory, and in gifts, prophetic rapture, or poetic dream. The Crucified, indeed, had conquered. On the Cross, He conquered sin, and death, and hell; slain, with the very weapons, they had framed for Him. And, when He rose to heaven, the fortieth day, the angels sang, from David's Psalm, what Paul expounded, as history: "When He ascended up on high, he led captivity captive." But, while the vaults of Heaven were ringing, with Hosannas, and with Hallelujahs, to their reascended King; and all the hosts of light exulted, in the triumph of the truth, the little handful, that had been with Jesus, were huddling, like the sheep, that hear the wolf, into that upper room, whose doors were closed, for very fear. Their hearts were bleeding, where the loving Saviour's fond embrace had torn itself away; and, of the gracious words, which He had breathed into their sinking spirits, of a Comforter, to come, when He had

gone, not one had been fulfilled. Ten days, they waited. Ten long days, to hearts, that ache, and sink, and die, with hope deferred ! Oh, what whole years, to hearts, that sigh and sicken, for a parted loved one ! When, as they waited, as love only waits ; and watched, as only love will watch ; and prayed, as love alone can pray : swiftly and suddenly, as when the electric flame bursts from the overloaded cloud ; and earth is shaken ; and the sky ablaze ; the sign of their redemption came. “ A sound, from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty, wind : ” when it sweeps down, through some ravine, among the Alps, and lays the pines, all, prostrate. The house all filled with it, “ where they were sitting : ” till it rocked and reeled, from turret, to foundation-stone. On every sacred head, a forked flame of fire ; that seemed a burning tongue. The conscious presence of the Holy Ghost, in every heart. The proof of it, undoubted, that unlearned men, who knew but their own, Galilean, dialect, harsh, even, on Jewish ears, could speak, at once, to the assembled multitude, from every land, in all the languages of earth. And, more than these. More than all miracles and signs. More than the wind, the earthquake, and the fire, which the old prophet saw ; and were repeated, now. The men, who shrunk, like startled sheep, before, came boldly up, the lions of the Lord. A fisherman has power, from God, to prick the hearts of thousands. The persecutors plead for pardon, from the persecuted. Heathen and Jews kneel, to the bleeding Cross. Heathen and Jews receive, upon their brows, its saving sign. Heathen and Jews become new

creatures, in Christ Jesus. The strong heart of selfishness warms into flesh. The iron hand of avarice is opened wide, with charity. They bring their wealth. They bring their sins. They bring themselves. They cast them, all, at the Apostles' feet. They have, no more, a self. They are the Lord's. They have one hand. They have one heart. They have one soul. It is, on earth, as has been sung, of heaven :

“ All that we know, of saints, above,
Is, that they sing, and, that they love.”

Nor, was it ended, with that glorious Pentecost. The “rushing, mighty wind” has filled the world; waking the buried nations, into life. The earthquake of its power has toppled down the temples of old Heathenism. Of the bright tongues, that had their utterance, then, it may be said, in David's words: “there is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard; their line is gone out through all the earth; and their words, unto the end of the world.” And, wheresoever, among all the tribes of men, truth is triumphant over error; sin is rebuked by holiness; self is inflamed to love; sorrow is kindled into joy; and light let in upon the grave, it is the glory, shed, upon the world, by those old Pentecostal fires.

“ It fills the Church of God ; it fills
The sinful world, around :
Only, in stubborn hearts and wills,
No place, for it, is found.

“To other strains, our souls are set :

A giddy whirl of sin

Fills ears and brain ; and will not let

Heaven’s harmonies come in.”

Dearly beloved, if it be so, then, for you, the Pentecost is vain. Its tongues reach not your ears. Its fires touch not your hearts. Beautiful, for admonition and instruction, is our collect, for this day. “O God, who, as at this time, didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people, by sending, to them, the light of Thy Holy Spirit.” The Holy Spirit comes from heaven, to be our *Teacher*. We must sit meekly down, and be His scholars ; or, we cannot learn from Him. He is to teach our *hearts*. It is not learning, that we look for ; but love, and holiness, and piety : the renewal, in us, of God’s marred and mutilated image. It is, as *light*, that He comes to us. But, light falls, in vain, on eyes, or hearts, that shut themselves, against it. It is only to His *faithful* people, that God sends His Holy Spirit. Are you His “faithful people,” who listen not to the injunction of His word ? Are you His “faithful people,” who comply not with the ordinance of the Church ? Can you look for the sanctifying of the Spirit, who have no part in the Crucifying of His Son ? Can you count on the life of the Spirit, who feed not on the Body of the Son ? Can you hope for the consolation of the Spirit, when you turn from the life-blood of the Son ? The Pentecost, by the divine command, was made dependent on the Passion. It was the bleeding of the Lamb, that brought the brooding of the Dove. You

cannot have the nestling of the one, but in the nurture of the other. Merciful Jesus, our Intercessor in heaven, as Thou wast our sacrifice on earth, still plead for us Thy bleeding love, still woo for us Thy brooding Dove, to win us to Thyself: and unto Thee with Him and the Almighty Father—the Persons Three, the Godhead only one—shall ever be ascribed all glory and all praise.

SERMON XXXIII.

Trinity Sunday.

FOR six months, nearly, we have been commemorating, through festival after festival, the humanity of our Redeemer. The Nativity. The Circumcision. The Manifestation, to the Gentiles. The Presentation, in the Temple. The Crucifixion. The Resurrection. The Ascension. Is it much, that we consecrate this day to His divinity? In the beautiful memories of Christmas, and the Epiphany, and Easter, we have lived, with Him, as it were, in the sufferings and sorrows of His manhood. Can we do less, than lift our hearts up, in the solemnities of Trinity Sunday, to the triumphs and trophies of His Godhead? As, in the Eucharist service, for this day—"It *is* very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should, at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God; for the precious death and merits of Thy Son, Christ, our Lord; and, for the sending to us of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who are one with Thee, in Thy eternal Godhead: therefore, with Angels and Archangels, and with all the

company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name, evermore praising Thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory: Glory be to Thee, O Lord most high. Amen."

The feast of Trinity is, thus, the consummation of the Christian Year. The Sundays, that come after it, are but the reflections of it, as, of a mirror, in a mirror, through a line of lessening light; until the Advent cloud rolls up, as from behind the throne of Judgment, and hides it from our sight, for half a year. In setting, in her heaven, the glorious Christian Zodiac, distinct with sacred signs, the Church employs that universal instinct of our nature, that the heart is reached, the soonest, and the surest, through the eye. She takes the great acts of her blessed Saviour's life, and makes them visible, in all the beauty of her feasts, or in the awful grandeur of her great Atonement Fast. And, each of them embodies, thus, and represents, and inculcates, and makes visible and palpable, the gracious doctrine, which results, from it. As, even the child has glimpses, of the wondrous Incarnation, in the manger-cradle, where the shepherds worshipped, on that night of nights; or, in the Star, that led the wise men, with their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense, to Bethlehem. And, to our whole humanity—the sun-burnt sailor, when the ship goes down, upon some sunken rock, among the Indian Archipelagoes; and the pale maiden, whom consumption wastes, that waits for the death-Angel, while she feels the pulses of her life ebb out, as the last sands, from an exhausted

glass—the blessed Cross sets forth, to eye and heart, the sacrifice of Calvary; and is looked up to, and laid hold of, as the sign of their salvation. But, while the tracks, that Jesus made, in blood and tears, upon the earth, with those most blessed feet, which, afterward, were nailed, for us, upon the Cross, are dearest to our human sympathies, as men, that love, and take, into their hearts, a suffering man; there needs, to link the scheme of our Salvation to that heaven, from which alone it could proceed, a recognition of its glorious power and Godhead. It was not more needful, that the Saviour of the world should come, as very man, than that He should still be, very God. And this stupendous fact the Feast of Trinity presents, proclaims, and makes perpetual. And, in the Epistle, from that wondrous Revelation of St. John, before whose loving heart, the heavens were opened, that he might be sure, that He, upon whose bosom, he had leaned, was with God, and was God, displays the Throne, and Him, that sits upon it, as the object of Angelic worship; when, at the feet of His enthroned and glorified humanity, who bore our sins, upon the Cross, the crowns are cast down; and, from the hosts of heaven, the voice of praise and adoration bursts, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for Thou hast created all things, and, for Thy pleasure, they are, and were created.”

“Jehovah! Father, Spirit, Son;
Mysterious Godhead, Three in One!
Before Thy throne, we, sinners, bend;
Grace, pardon, life, to us extend.”

The doctrine of the day is the divinity of Jesus Christ. All Holy Scripture teaches it. All Holy Scripture *is*, because of it. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." God taught it, in the Garden, when He made that wondrous promise, of the woman's seed : which He redeemed, by Gabriel, when, four thousand years from that, He sent him, to the meek and matchless Mary, with that mysterious Message, "that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." The blessed Jesus taught it, of Himself ; when He declared, "I and my Father are one." It was the teaching, everywhere, of Paul, "Jesus Christ, who is God over all, blessed for evermore ;" and, everywhere, of Peter, Jesus Christ, "He is Lord of all ;" and, everywhere, of all the Apostles ; "Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, and to-day, and forever." When Satan raised up Arius, to divide the world, as he deceived our Mother, with a lie, the Church, with one consent, lifted that trumpet voice, which you have heard, to-day, from old Nicea : "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father, before all worlds ; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one Substance with the Father ; by whom all things are made." She chants it, in her loftiest hymn, *Te Deum* : "The glorious company of the Apostles praise Thee ; the goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise Thee ; the noble army of Martyrs praise Thee ; the holy Church, throughout all the world, doth acknowledge Thee : the Father, of an

infinite Majesty ; Thine adorable, true, and only Son ; also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter : Thou art the King of glory, O Christ ; Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father." And, everywhere, in all the world, to-day, where priestly hands have broken the bread of life, and saintly souls have tasted of the saving cup, they lift their voices, up, with one accord, in that inimitable angel's song : "for Thou, only, art holy, Thou, only, art the Lord ; Thou, only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high, in the glory of God the Father."

And there is another, and more expressive, testimony, borne, this day, to the triumphant Godhead of the Saviour. In all the Christian world, it is an Ordination Sunday. "Agreeably, to the practice of the Primitive Church," our twentieth canon says, "the stated times of ordination shall be, on the Sundays, following the Ember weeks ; viz., the second Sunday in Lent, the Feast of Trinity, and the Sundays after the Wednesday following the 14th day of September, and the 13th of December." Hundreds of Christian Bishops will lay hands, to-day, on Deacons, and on Priests : and, everywhere, in England, and in India, and in the islands of the sea, as well as here, with us, that text of David will be realized, "the Lord gave the word : great was the company of the preachers." New voices shall proclaim, to-day, the Gospel of the Crucified. New hands shall be stretched out, to-day, to gather in the lambs, for which, He died. There shall be raised, to-day, new trophies of His Cross ; and angels shall exult, to-day, in new and nobler triumphs of His grace.

Dearly beloved, at the Cross, which was set up, on Calvary, the stream of human life, in every age, divides, and breaks. The Lamb, that hung, upon it, was for the fall, and rising again, of multitudes, in all the world. There, they must make their choice: and take the right, with them, whom He will own, as His, before His Father; or take the left, with them, whom He will blast forever, with these fearful words, "I never knew you." What the Cross of Jesus is, the Altar, which commemorates it, also is. It separates, between the good and evil; between them, that love God, and them, that love Him not. To the one, it is the very mercy-seat, let down, from heaven. To the other, it is the dreadful judgment throne. Dearly beloved, to some of you its last appeal may, now, be made. Hear it, and heed it, I beseech you, as if it were the last. Tell me, to what use were the golden grain, that is now waving, on ten thousand hills, if men refuse to take, and eat, it. Tell me, to what use, were the crystal streams, that burst, to-day, out from ten thousand mountain-springs, should men refuse to drink of them. And, if Jesus says, "He that eateth of this bread, shall live for ever," and ye eat not; if Jesus says, "he that drinketh of the water, that I shall give him, shall never thirst again," and ye drink not: tell me, beloved, if His blessed body was not broken, tell me, if the true Horeb of His holy heart, for you, has not been cleft, in vain. And, you, "who mind to come," think, for one moment! It is "the bread of heaven," which is here presented. Will you take it, in unholy hands? It is "the cup of

salvation," which is here mingled. Will you drink it, with uncharitable lips? Hear, what the Scripture saith: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood; ye have no life in you." Hear, what the Scripture saith: "Let a man examine himself; and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."

"It is my Maker—dare I stay?

My Saviour—dare I turn away?"

SERMON XXXIV.

Feast of the Purification of Saint Mary the Virgin.

THE LORD IN HIS HOLY TEMPLE.

MALACHI III. 1.—Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

ST. LUKE II. 29–32.—Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people, Israel.

TO-MORROW will be the feast of “The Presentation of Christ in the Temple; commonly called, The Purification of Saint Mary, the Virgin.” The two passages, from Holy Scripture, which I have just read to you, are taken, respectively, from the Portion appointed for the Epistle, and from the Holy Gospel, for that day. The appointment is, in two respects, remarkable: as one, of only seven instances, in which the Portion for the Epistle is taken from the Old Testament; and, as the only case, in which, the Epistle and the Gospel, are both prophetic. We have a striking illustration, here, of what that means, in the twentieth Article; where

the Church is said to be “a Witness and a Keeper of Holy Writ:” not only, preserving it, in safety, as her sacred trust, generation after generation, and from age to age; but, also, testifying, as a Teacher, sent from God, divinely perpetuated, as to its application, and its interpretation. The words, which Malachi, moved by the Holy Ghost, had uttered, four hundred years before, “the Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His Temple,” fulfilled, she shows, by “Simeon”—a man “just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was upon him;”—when, in his presence, led, “by the Spirit, into the Temple,” “the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him, after the custom of the Law.”

The first child of the first parents was conceived, and born, in sin. The nature, which Adam lost, by transgression, was lost, to his posterity. Men do not gather grapes, from thorns; nor figs, from thistles. Hence, the provision in the 12th Chapter of Leviticus, foreshadowing the offering of “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;” that the mother of a son should be separated from the congregation, as unclean, for six and sixty days. “And, when the days of her purifying are fulfilled,” “she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering, and a young pigeon or a turtle dove for a sin-offering,” “unto the priest; who shall offer it before the Lord, and make an atonement for her.” This she was to do, as a thank-offering, for the mercy which she had experienced: and, also, as an acknowledgment of her uncleanness, as having borne

a sinner; that she might be cleansed from her infirmity. And this will show "the custom of the Law," as applied to the event commemorated to-morrow, so far, as it is called "The Purification of Saint Mary, the Virgin."

To understand that part of it, which supplies its other title, "The Presentation of Christ in the Temple," you must compare the 12th chapter of Exodus, with the 14th chapter of Numbers. The first will tell you, how, when God, for the avenging of His name, in the deliverance of His people, slew all the first-born of the land of Egypt, He spared the first-born of the Israelites, by that mysterious blood, upon their door-posts; at sight of which, the Angel passed them by, and spared them. In the other, you will read that He thus claimed all the first-born of males, as His own, to do the service of His sanctuary: and only released them, when He afterwards employed the tribe of Levi, for this ministry, on the condition, that they were presented in the Temple, and redeemed, for a price: five shekels, or about a quarter of an eagle, for each one.

That for *their own* sakes, that blessed mother, and that undefiled Son, this service was not needed, must be perfectly apparent. No need of *her* purification. For, that which was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of her, was, in the Angel's words, "a holy thing," whose birth was, therefore, without stain of sin. No need of *His* redemption. For, He was the everlasting, as He was the only-begotten, Son; incarnate, now, to do His Father's will. Yet, as He humbled Himself, to

be “made of a woman,” so, He condescended to be “made, under the Law.” And, as He was not, yet, to be manifested, as the Son of God, she was to do, in all things, as that Law required, of every mother. Her purification and His redemption, like His circumcision and His baptism, examples, in their perfect beauty, for us, whom He redeemed, to follow; in strict fulfilment of all the ordinances of God, as He so touchingly replied, to John; when, he, in his humility, shrank from the thought of *his* baptizing Him: “Suffer it to be so now; for, thus, it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.”

The prophecy of Malachi was perfectly fulfilled, in the record of St. Luke. That it applied to Jesus Christ, we know. Its opening words are, “Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me.” The very words, which our most blessed Lord applied to John the Baptist, as His own fore-runner: “this is he, of whom it is written, Behold I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare the way before Thee.” The Lord, whose messenger was thus foretold, was to come. He *had* come, heralded by angels, as the promised woman’s seed. He was to come to the Temple. He was brought there, by His parents, to fulfil the Law. He was to come suddenly, or unexpectedly. Among the crowd, which thronged the Temple, there were two, alone, that knew Him; Simeon and Anna: and only they, as they were taught expressly by the Spirit. But, not only does the record of the Evangelist fulfil the promise of the Prophet.

The two together plainly prove Him, God. By whose authority, did Malachi announce the Christ, and His fore-runner? "Behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." And, yet, the language of the Lord of hosts, as to the fore-runner of Jesus, is, "He shall prepare the way before *Me*." Again, the promised One, is to come to His Temple. But the Temple is Jehovah's. Nay, closer, yet, than this: the very words of Malachi are, "the Jehovah, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His Temple." And, yet, he adds, "even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in." What can be plainer, than that Jesus, Whom St. Paul calls "the Mediator of the new covenant," is Jehovah. My brethren, is not ours a wondrous faith? Do we permit our hearts to dwell upon its wonders? Does our wonder lead us to adore? As in that most magnificent of human hymns, addressed, throughout, to Jesus Christ, the very "Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Thy glory."

And now behold how meekness mates with majesty, in Him, Who, when He was always God, became a man, for us. The blessing to be mothers was not to be restricted to the rich. Therefore, if she who came with child-bed offerings was not able to procure a lamb, a turtle-dove would be accepted in its place. And Mary, that most blessed of all mothers, because the Mother of the Son of God, came with the offering of the poor man's wife, "A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons."

How many, and what touching lessons are suggested, by this sacred scene ! Where should the happy mother first betake herself, but, as the blessed Mary, to the house of God ? How can a woman own such mercies from the Lord, without “accustomed offerings ;” for their relief, whose poverty must aggravate their perils ! And, if she have but little to bestow, why not, like Mary, give that little.

Again, where should the children first be brought, but, as the infant Saviour, to the house of God ? Brought, in their new-born freshness, to the laver, where the sinner must be born again, in holy Baptism ? Brought, in their childish tenderness, and helplessness, to learn, at their dear mother’s knee, the Spouse and Bride of Christ, the simple teachings of the Catechism ? Brought, in their bloom of youth, to own their Saviour, in the holy rite of Confirmation, and implore the grace, which is to keep them His ?

Again, how can they hope to be with Jesus Christ hereafter, who are not with Him here ? Was not He circumcised ? Was not He presented in the Temple ? Did not He, at twelve years old, go up to it, as then admitted to its highest privileges ; and linger in its courts, when His dear Mother had been gone from Him three days ? Was not He baptized of John, in Jordan ? And did not He strictly keep the Passover ; and consecrate it, by His painful death, to be the sacrament of His own blood to faithful souls forever ? Was there a single one of these observances, that He had need of, for Himself ? Did He not keep and do them all, as pat-

terns for us to imitate? Nay, has He not enjoined them upon all who would be saved, as necessary to salvation: "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you?" Can you refuse to be baptized, or to bring your children to baptism; can you neglect to be confirmed, or to have your children prepared for it, and brought to it; can you wilfully abstain from the Lord's Table, and separate from your brethren, who feed upon the banquet of that most heavenly food: and think, the while, that you are following Christ; and think, the while, that you can claim Him as your Saviour? Ah, my beloved, this is all a vain and rash reliance. Only the pure in heart have promise, to see God. And all we dare to pray for, in the Collect for to-morrow is, that "we may be presented unto" God "with pure and clean hearts, by the same Jesus Christ our Lord." Will He present them to the Father, who refuse, in His own ordinance, to come to Him? Can He present them with pure and clean hearts, who disregard the sacrament of our redemption, and refuse the tokens of that blood, without which, there is no remission? As in the prayer of humble access, when we declare to Him whom we approach: "we are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Thy Table;" and plead mere mercy as our only ground of hope, "Thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy;" we still go on to pray, "Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to

eat the flesh of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink His blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed, through His most precious blood."

That wondrous Babe, Jehovah in our flesh, Who came, as now, into His own Temple, and was acknowledged, in saintly Simcon's swan-song, divinely breathed into his aged heart, as "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel," is yet to come again. Hear how the latest of the Prophets labours with the load of inspiration, when he foretells the terrors of that time! "But, who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand, when He appeareth?"

"That day of wrath, that dreadful day :

When heaven and earth shall pass away !"

Like His first advent, His second shall be sudden. Not even the angels know the time of it. It shall come in an hour, when men are least prepared for it. He "shall suddenly come to His Temple." "Who may abide the day of His coming? Who shall stand when He appeareth?" Shall they, who receive Him not, as Prince and Saviour? Shall they, who delight not in His coming, as the Angel of the covenant of grace? Shall they, who are not diligently walking in His ordinances, and striving to do His commandments? And are we thus receiving Him? Are we thus delighting, in Him? Are we preparing a temple for Him, in our hearts; that He may enter in, and dwell with us? Are we, like Him, merciful to the poor, forgiving to our

foes, patient toward all men? Are we offering, daily, unto the Lord, an offering, in righteousness? And is it that, which He alone accepts: "ourselves, our souls and bodies," "a reasonable, holy and living, sacrifice?" My beloved, when He comes again, He does not come to save; He does not come to pity; He does not come to spare. "We believe, that Thou shalt come to be our Judge." "We therefore, pray Thee, help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood."

SERMON XXXV.

Feast of Matthias--Apostle and Martyr.

THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY.

ACTS I. 26.—And they gave forth their lots ; and the lot fell upon Matthias : and he was numbered, with the eleven Apostles.

IN its first sense, "Apostle" is *Messenger*: any one sent, specially, to bear a message. It is chiefly understood of those whom Jesus sent, to "preach ; saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand : " and whom, on the day of His ascension, He commissioned, to go "into all the world," and "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them." At first, they were twelve, in number. Before His ascension, one had ceased to be. It was into his place, that Matthias, as the text relates, was chosen.

It is a melancholy, but instructive, story. From the world, which He had come to save, the blessed Jesus chose but twelve, to be with Him, while here, and to proclaim His kingdom, after He had gone to heaven. And, of that twelve, one was a devil. He had gone in and out, with Him. He had shared His counsels. He had partaken of His poverty. He had enjoyed His

favour. He had received power, from Him, to heal the sick, and raise the dead. He had been promised a kingdom ; and to sit on one of the thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. But, he was a miser. And had, thus, become a thief. And, at the last, a traitor. And, for the paltry sum of twenty dollars, the price at which a common slave was held, under the law, he delivered up his Lord, to suffering and death. David had seen it, all, a thousand years before. "It is not an open enemy, that hath done me this dishonour ; for, then, I could have borne it : neither was it mine adversary, that did magnify himself against me ; for, then, peradventure, I would have hid myself, from him : but, it was even thou, my companion, my guide, and mine own familiar friend ; we took sweet counsel together, and walked in the house of God, as friends." And, again, "Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." And Zechariah named the price, five hundred years, before : "So they weighed, for my price, thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter : a goodly price, that I was prized at, of them." "A goodly price," indeed : since it is written in the Law, "If the ox shall push a man-servant, or maid-servant," his owner "shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned."

That Blessed One, "whom they of the children of Israel did value," had suffered death, had risen from the dead, had ascended into heaven. His faithful ones were waiting, as He bade them, for the promise of the Father,

before they entered on the works, for which He called them. They all “continued, with one accord, in prayer and supplication.” Not, till the sacred Twelve were made complete, would Jesus send the Comforter. There were Twelve Patriarchs. There were Twelve tribes of Israel. There must be Twelve Apostles. It so pleased God. “And, in those days, Peter stood up, in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty,) Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before, concerning Judas, which was guide to them, that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this Ministry. Now, this man purchased a field, with the reward of iniquity; and, falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as, that field is called in their proper tongue, *Aceldama*, that is to say, *The field of blood*. For it is written, in the book of Psalms, *Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein*; and, *His bishopric let another take*. Wherefore, of those men, which have companied with us, all the time, that the Lord Jesus went in and out, among us, beginning, from the baptism of John, unto that same day, that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained, to be a witness, with us, of His resurrection. And they appointed two, Joseph, called Barsabas, who was surnamed *Justus*, and *Matthias*. And they prayed, and said, *Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all*

men, shew, whether of these two Thou hast chosen; that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship; from which Judas, by transgression, fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias: and He was numbered with the eleven Apostles."

This is a passage, full of points. And, of the greatest and most lasting moment. A few of them demand our present notice. They will suggest more to your devout reflection. Pray God, it be to the furtherance of truth, and to the increase of charity!

i. And, first, *God's foreknowledge of every thing is entirely consistent with man's perfect freedom.* We have seen how minutely the character and position of him, who was to betray the Saviour, are depicted, in the Psalm. And, the results of his treachery, as clearly. "Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein." "And, his bishopric, let another take." Yet, Judas, as St. Peter says, "fell," "by transgression;" and, this, in the perfect exercise of his moral responsibility, "that he might go to his own place." His love of money. His thievish practices, indulged, in pilfering, from the small store of his poor companions, and their poorer Master. His yielding to the temptation, in offering to betray his Lord, for the thirty pieces. His cruel consummation of the treacherous deed. And, then, the re-action of his conscience. His casting away from him, the wages of his crime. And, finally, his fearful suicide. In all these, he acted, with the most unquestionable freedom: though, all the while, he was

fulfilling ancient prophecy. It is a lesson, to us all. There is no sin, but of our choice. "God is not willing, that any should perish." Like Balaam, Judas "loved the wages of unrighteousness." From first to last, by his own hand, he perished.

ii. The Scripture cited, which is the day's Epistle, *teaches the exactness of the Divine arrangements*. It was as necessary that one should be appointed, in the place of Judas, as it was that Judas should perish, by his iniquity: "One must be ordained." Eleven Apostles would not do. Neither would one or more of the one hundred and twenty do. "One must be ordained." Read, how minutely Noah was directed, in the building of the ark. Read, how minutely, Moses was instructed, as to the arrangements of the Tabernacle, in the wilderness. Read, how minutely, the construction of the Temple, on Mount Sion, was described. "God is a God of order, in all the churches of the saints." There must be Twelve Apostles. There must be three orders, in the ministry. There must be two sacraments. Man, at his peril, deviates. Abana and Pharpar may have been better, many ways, than Jordan. Yet, Naaman must wash there. There may have been other pools than Siloam, at Jerusalem. Only that would make the blind man see.

iii. Again, it is the lesson of this Scripture, that *the Ministry is of Divine appointment*. Peter was there. The Eleven were there. The one hundred and twenty were there. Yet, all of them, together, had not power to fill the place of Judas. "One must be ordained."

But they had no authority to do it. It must be God's appointment. It must have His authority. All that they could do, was to select the two, who seemed to them, most fit. "And they appointed two, Joseph, called Barsabas, who was surnamed, Justus, and Matthias." The rest, must God do. "And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two, Thou hast chosen." Who but God, can send God's Ministers?

"Who, then, uncalled by Thee,
Dare touch Thy spouse, Thy very self, below?
Or who dare count him summoned worthily,
Except Thine hand and seal he show?"

iv. Again, *the ministry, though of Divine appointment, must be of outward designation.* When Jesus, who was "called of God," would enter on His Ministry, the Dove must come from Heaven, to make the attestation visible: and men must hear the very words of God; "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." When He would send Apostles, to accomplish all His work, "He breathed on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." And, when their number must be made complete, before the Comforter could come, "they gave forth their lots." These were all cases, by themselves. And, yet, the principle of outward designation was most carefully preserved. After "the day of Pentecost was fully come," and the divine and Holy Spirit was given, in all its blessedness, to the Apostles, "the laying on of hands" became the outward designation: as of Timothy, by St. Paul; so, of every Bishop, from his time.

“Where can Thy seal be found,
But on the chosen seed, from age to age;
By thine anointed heralds, duly crowned,
As kings and priests, Thy war to wage?”

v. Another lesson of this Scripture is, that *unworthiness in the man does not affect the validity of his ministrations*. This, Peter says expressly: “He was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.” As it is in the twenty-sixth article: “Although in the visible church, the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the ministration of the Word and Sacraments, yet, forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ’s, and do minister, by His commission and authority, we may use their ministry, both, in hearing the Word of God, and in receiving the Sacraments. Neither is the effect of Christ’s ordinance taken away, by their wickedness, nor the grace of God’s gifts diminished, from such as by faith, and rightly, do receive the sacraments ministered unto them; which be effectual, because of Christ’s institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men.” To suppose it otherwise, would be to suppose the ministry the sources, while they are the channels, merely, of renewing grace. As St. Paul says, “We have this treasure in earthen vessels; that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” And, moreover, it would require, in every man, the power to read the heart; and constitute, in every man, a judge of every minister.

“Then fearless walk we forth,
 Yet full of trembling, ministers of God ;
 Our warrant sure, but doubting of our worth ;
 By our own shame, alike, and glory, awed.

Dread Searcher of the hearts—
 Thou, who didst seal, by Thy descending Dove,
 Thy servant's choice—O, help us in our parts,
 Else, helpless, found, to learn and teach, Thy love !”

vi. *It is a solemn lesson of this Scripture, that salvation is not by privileges.* Else, how had Judas not been saved. He was, every whit, an Apostle. “He was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.” But, so had Peter, who denied his Lord, three times. Was it not Adam, fresh from the hand of God, and intimate with Him in Paradise, who brought down ruin on himself, and all his unborn race? Were not the chosen people, the destroyers of their Prince and Saviour? Have not greatest heresies been brought in, by the greatest teachers? And are not we, with all our light, with all our grace, with all our blessings, ungrateful, disobedient, and rebellious? Nor, my beloved, while Redemption takes in all, salvation is of individual men. Privileges save no man. Abused, they minister to condemnation. It is on Chorazin and Bethsaida, where the mightiest works were done, that wo shall come. It is Capernaum, which was exalted unto heaven, that shall be brought down to hell. No privilege can save. Christ only saves. Christ, formed in us, the only hope of glory.

vii. And, one more lesson of this Scripture, *the min-*

istry of Jesus is a ministry of love. Not he who will be rich, not he who seeks his own, not he who loves his ease, is of the “faithful and true Pastors,” which we pray for, for the church, to-day : but he who is contented to be poor, so he make others rich ; who gives himself, as Christ did, for the sheep ; who takes the cross up, daily, after Him.

“ Who is God’s chosen priest ?

He, who on Christ, stands waiting, day and night.

Who hath learned lowliness

From his Lord’s cradle, patience from His Cross ;

Whom poor men’s eyes and hearts consent to bless ;

To whom, for Christ, the world is loss.”

Pastor of Pastors, make and keep us such ; and take these sheep and lambs, as Thine ; and bring us all, to that one fold, whose only shepherd is Thyself.

SERMON XXXVI.

Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

THE INCARNATION.

GENESIS III. 15.—I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

TO-MORROW is the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It will pass by multitudes, without regard. And, yet, there never was a day, so pregnant with such issues. Out of it, the Nativity. Out of it, the Crucifixion. Out of it, the Resurrection. Out of it, the Ascension. Out of it, the coming of the Holy Ghost. Is it not, really, an eventful day?

It commemorates, historically, the announcement to the Blessed Virgin Mary, that by a miraculous conception, the power of the Highest overshadowing her, she was to be the Mother of the Saviour of mankind. The bearer of this marvellous message was an angel, the Archangel Gabriel. This, the Gospel for the day relates. That, in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word might be established, Isaiah had said it seven hundred years before: "A Virgin shall conceive

and bear a son." This is part of the portion appointed for the Epistle. But there was an annunciation long before Isaiah's, even four thousand years before the event, and that from Jehovah Himself: "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed: It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." The woman's seed is the Virgin's Son. The bruising of His heel is this Crucifixion. His bruising of the Serpent's head is the victory achieved against the Devil, in His glorious Resurrection, as manifested more completely, in His illustrious Ascension, when He led captive him, by whom the world was captivated. The happiest commentary, which the text can have, and, so, the fittest outline of this Sermon, is the Collect for the festival: "We beseech Thee, O Lord, pour Thy grace into our hearts; that, as we have known the Incarnation of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, by the message of an angel, so, by His Cross and Passion, we may be brought unto the glory of His Resurrection, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord."

THE SPECIAL TOPIC OF THE DAY IS THE INCARNATION.

THE INCARNATION WAS IN ORDER TO THE CROSS AND
PASSION.

THE CROSS AND PASSION WERE FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT
OF THE RESURRECTION.

The special topic of the Day is the Incarnation. “In the beginning, was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” Was ever so much said, in such few words? No human mind can comprehend it. The angels desire to look into it; but, get no farther. It occupies eternity. It was in the counsels of the God-head, from the foundation of the world. Its issues, whether, in the saved, or in the lost, will never have an end. And, yet, how simple the narration! A maiden of Nazareth is espoused to a poor carpenter. She is chosen of Almighty God, to be the Mother of the promised Saviour. She is apprised of it, by an Archangel. She answers, as a maiden would. For the rest, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to thy word!” What followed this—the visit to Bethlehem, in obedience to the edict of imperial Cæsar; the birth, in a rude stable; the manger, for a cradle; and, yet, that choir of Angels, to announce the birth; those Eastern wise men, with their gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh, to recognize the Universal King—need not be noticed now. Our business is with that mysterious Incarnation, which is the special topic of the Festival.

The Incarnation was in order to the Cross and Passion. It had no other object. What other could it have? He could have nothing added to His empire. It was universal. He could have nothing added to His glory. It was eternal. He could have nothing added to His happiness. It was infinite. There was but one

thing, that He could indulge. It was His love. There was but one thing, that He could gain. It was the restoration of lost man. But, the divine law had been broken. The divine holiness had been destroyed. The divine image had been marred. The law was to be vindicated. The holiness was to be satisfied. The image was to be repaired. Therefore, was His visage marred, more than any man; and His form, more than the sons of men. Therefore, was He wounded, for our transgressions, and bruised, for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and, with His stripes, we were healed.

“ There must a Mediator plead,
Who, God and man, may both embrace :
With God, for man, to intercede ;
And offer men the purchased grace.
And, lo, the Son of God is slain,
To be, this Mediator, crowned ;
In Him, my soul, be cleansed from stain ;
In Him, thy righteousness be found ! ”

The Cross and Passion were for the achievement of the Resurrection. Otherwise, what difference between the death of Jesus, and of the two that hung beside Him? If the Cross had closed His life; if the grave had shut Him in forever; if His soul had been left in hell; and His flesh had seen corruption: alas, for human hopes; alas, for human happiness! For, none of these can, by any means, redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom, for him. For it cost more to redeem their souls; so that he must let that alone, forever. Therefore that text of the Apostle: “ Who was

delivered, for our offences ; and was raised again, for our justification." A good man might have died. Only, the Son of God could expiate our offences. Good men have died and risen again. Only He who died for our offences was raised for our justification.

"So, count yourselves, as dead to sin ;
But graciously restored ;
And made, henceforth, alive to God,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Nothing can be lovelier, or more holy, than the character, which the Holy Scriptures apply to the Blessed Virgin. What quiet thoughtfulness, purity, faith, and submission to God's will ! " Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; be it unto me according to thy word." Such are they, always, " Who excel in virtue." Hastiness to act and speak is not the habit of faith. " He that believeth shall not make haste." Faith produces patience, calmness, and thoughtfulness, among its fruits. And, where the habits of quiet thought are deepest in the mind, the character is ever most gentle, pure, and devout.

And yet, with all her personal excellence, and with the transcendent honour which was hers, to be the Mother of the Son of God, she has no claim to our devotion ; she was not free from the birth-sin, which Adam's children all inherit ; she was not, however blessed, among women, as the Mother of her Lord, raised from the rank of mortals, and of sinners, redeemed and ransomed by His blood. The Lord Him-

self has plainly settled this. "And it came to pass, as He spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto Him, Blessed is the womb, that bare Thee, and the paps, which Thou hast sucked. But He said, Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."

"Blessed, among women is thy lot ;
But, higher meed, we yield thee not ;
Nor more than woman's name.

"Nor solemn 'Hail,' to thee, we pay ;
Nor prayer, to thee, for mercy pray ;
Nor hymn of glory, raise ;
Nor thine, we deem, is God's high throne ;
Nor thine, the birthright of thy Son,
The Mediator's praise.

"Mother of Jesus, Parent dear !
If aught, of earthly, thou could'st hear,
If aught, of human, see ;
What pangs, thy humble heart, must wring,
To know thy Saviour, Lord and King,
Dishonoured, thus, for thee !

"Bless'd is the womb that bare Him ; bless'd
The bosom where His lips were press'd ;
But rather bless'd are they
Who hear His word, and keep it well ;
The loving homes, where, Christ shall dwell,
And never pass away."

The feast of the Annunciation is a starting point in the Christian Year. Nine months, from it, comes the

Nativity. And then the glorious days, that mark the incarnate pathway of the Son of God. And so the years roll on ; another, and another, and another. And we mark them as little, as the child, the waves, that chase each other, on the beach, where he is gathering shells. And, yet, to each of us, the time must come, when the last wave is rolling up. And, may it not be, that this is it ? And, if it should, what then ? My beloved, if the Christian Year is duly estimated, it is inestimable, in its fidelity. An Eastern monarch had a monitor, to warn him, every day, "O king, remember, thou art mortal !" To us, "*memento mori*" brings no skeleton, no coffin, and no pall. It comes, in joyous feasts, or solemn fasts ; in Christmas, in Epiphany, or Easter, or Ascension ; or, as, to-night, in that, which is the Mother of them all, the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, who was the Mother of our Lord. Not, all of us, who are, now, here, will be, here, when it comes, again. And, only God knows which of us shall not be. Our only wisdom, then, is in the thought that it may be any, may be all, of us. Think of that moonlight, on the Delaware. Think of that crowded * boat. Think of that joyous crowd, whose feet already seemed, upon the threshold, which makes home, a heaven. Then, think of that fierce flame ; and of that cold wave ; and of that treacherous ice ; and, that, of every two, one found a watery grave ! Is it not true, that, "in the midst of life, we are in death" ? Is it not "appointed unto men

* A Camden ferry-boat had just burned up, upon the Delaware, with fearful loss of life.

once, to die ; and, after that, the judgment " ? And, for the issues of that final judgment, is there a hope for any sinner, but in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ ? " Kiss the Son, then, lest he be angry, and so ye perish from the right way. If His wrath be kindled, yea, but a little ; blessed are all they that put their trust on Him."

SERMON XXXVII.

Thanks-giving-Day.

THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

Exodus xxxiii. 19.—I will make all My goodness pass before thee.

AMONG all the wonders of that elder day, which the First Testament records, there is nothing more wonderful, than the privileged intimacy, to which Moses was admitted, with God : the Lord speaking with him, “ face to face, as a man speaketh with his friend.” Standing, at our awful distance, from the divine presence, it is not possible for us to conceive of such an intercourse. We cannot understand the nature of those interposing shadows, which tempered down, to mortal sufferance, the splendours of that light, which no man may approach unto ; and, while they let the milder rays of love and mercy pass, turned back the lightning blaze of glory, which none could look upon, and live.

The passage, from which the text is taken, is the narrative of one of these wonderful interviews, between the Hebrew Shepherd and the Lord Jehovah. In other similar records, there may be more of grandeur and

solemnity ; more that awes us, by the glories, and overpowers us, with the terrors of the Godhead. But this is marked by beauty, gentleness and grace. We admire it, for its wonderful condescension, to human infirmity ; and are won by its affecting display of that loveliest of all His attributes, the merciful goodness of the Lord.

It was during the wanderings of Israel, in the wilderness, and just before the giving of the Law, that the scene, which it describes, took place. Mighty, as their rescue from the land of Egypt had been, and gracious as was their daily miracle of preservation, the chosen people rebelled against the Lord, and made a calf, and worshipped it. For this, the anger of the Lord was kindled. "Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiff-necked people. I will come up in the midst of thee, in a moment, and consume thee." But, in the midst of wrath, God still remembered mercy. The cloudy pillar, that wrapped the invisible glory, maintained its station, at the Tabernacle door. The Lord still spake with Moses, face to face. The divine promise was still kept : "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest," and Moses said, "If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For, wherein shall it be known, that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight ? Is it not in that Thou goest with us ? So shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people, that are upon the face of the earth." And the Lord yielded to the earnest pleading of the prophet, for his people ; and He said, "I will do this thing also that thou hast

spoken ; for thou hast found grace in My sight, and I know thee by name." Emboldened by the success of his petitions, the prophet ventures to propose another : "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory!" It was no longer the voice of supplication for an erring people, but the presumptuous impulse of personal ambition ; seeking great things for itself. There may have mingled with it, in the heart of Moses, some lurkings of a secret unbelief ; which, overlooking all the mighty miracles which God had wrought, yearned to behold the brightness of the divinity, and in the midst of signs and wonders, asked for more : "I beseech Thee show me Thy glory!" But the Lord knows better what is good for us, than we can for ourselves ; and will not, unless it be in anger, grant, to our most fervent prayers, that which will do us harm. And, so, His answer was, "I will make all My goodness pass before thee. Thou canst not see My face ; for there shall no man see Me, and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock ; and it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand, while I pass by ; and I will take away My hand, and thou shalt see My back parts, but My face shall not be seen." What the nature of the vision was, which passed that day, before the prophet's guarded eye, it is not for us here to know. When the veil shall pass away, from before all faces, in the splendours of the resurrection morning, that rifted rock shall tell its story of the wonders of

that hour. And the face, which brought down from the mountain such reflections of the light divine as mortal eyes could not endure, shall beam with brighter glories, as that story is rehearsed. And all the harps of heaven, and every voice of all the ransomed saints from every corner of the earth, shall sing in joyful chorus the song of Moses and of the Lamb: "Great and marvellous are Thy ways, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name!"

Beloved brethren, is there nothing to attune our hearts to fitness, for a part in that celestial concert? Are there no visions of God's tempered glory, to which our eyes have been opened; and in which our hearts rejoice? Does not He make, with every day and hour of our protected lives, His goodness pass before us? Stand, for a moment, still; and with no other charm, than faith and love work, with permitted power, call up before you the varied pageant of your life.

Farthest and faintest, in the light of memory, rise your infant years. The treasured beauty of a Mother's smile. The treasured music of a Mother's voice. The day, without a cloud. The night, whose dreams were all of heaven. The angel-guarded path. The angel-shadowed pillow. Whence were all these but from that overflowing well of goodness, from which your being sprung?

The pageant passes on. It is the golden glow of childhood, that is bathing in its liquid light, the scenes

on which it falls. Its careless, school-day hours. Its holidays, the sunniest of the year. Its free, light-hearted carols. The shaded slope, on which the vacant noon was lounged away. The woodland echo. The brawling stream, that, in the distance, seems a silver thread, upon a ground of green. The toys and sports, brief sorrows and bright joys, of girlish gentleness or boyish mirth. The brow, that never bore a cloud. The breast, that never felt a pang. Thus passed away, with smiles, that were the sunshine of the heart, and tears that in their warmth were soon exhaled, the happy years of childhood. And every guided step that fell securely among dangers, and every guarded hour with its hair-breadth escapes, proclaimed the goodness of the Lord.

The pageant passes on. A wider circle opens, and a scene more varied. The horizon, as it recedes, brightens with stronger lights, and is defined by more decided lines. It is the age of youth. The world is new and fair. Hope tells a flattering tale. The cheated ear supplies a ready listener. Fancy arrays her air-drawn castles, and her gardens in the clouds; and the enchanted eye believes them true. Who, if the ear of youth detected, in what seems, to its unpractised sense, the music of the spheres, the thousand discords that disturb it, could ever bear to brave the din of life! Who, if the eye of youth could see, beyond the gorgeous clouds that bound its prospect, the gathering tempest and the brooding storm, would not shrink back, in terror, from the threatening shipwreck? How does the

merciful goodness of God display itself, in making the inexperienced ignorance of youth subservient to that moral strength, which is to meet the trials and ride out the storms of life !

Once more, the pageant changes. The youth becomes a man. The wisdom, that befits him for the various duties that await him. The health that makes the humblest fortune blessed, and without which, life has lost its joy. The strength that bears him up in troubles, and sustains him in temptations. The care that keeps him through the dangers of the day ; and after every night renews his life. Private esteem. The public confidence. The competence that crowns his toils. The distinctions that reward his services. His happy home. The friends that cheer its hearth. The loved ones, that, by dividing, more than double all its joys. What are these but gifts of Him from whom all good things come ! And how, in these, and all the countless blessings which, as vivid and as varied as the tints of the autumnal forest, like them defy the art of man to number or describe them, does God forever make His goodness pass before us.

Nor is this yet the whole. Deep as this overflowing cup of human life, sin, like a subtle poison, lurks : and sickness, sorrow, pain and death are its inevitable issues. Upon the fairest scene of earthly happiness, the cloud is lowering, and the storm will break. In sickness or in sorrow, the sweetest draught of mortal joy is turned to gall. The grave breaks off, alike the rugged road of honour, and the tranquil path of peace ; and

rends in twain the hearts that love has knit, and sympathy made one. And, worse than all, the pang of conscious guilt, and the heart-sickness of anticipated condemnation bear the wrung spirit down to earth, and ante-date the sentence of the day of doom. But, ever mindful of the creatures which His hand has formed, and pitying them in their rebellion, He interposed again, for their deliverance; and in His gracious plan of pardon and redemption made His goodness pass before us. Tongue cannot tell the wonders or the grace of that mysterious interference: when the world beheld its incarnate Maker dying for its sins; and the degenerate and ruined race paid, on the bleeding Cross, and in the person of the spotless Lamb, the price of its propitiation. For the full measure of that gratitude which it demands, our hearts are all too narrow, and our lives too short. But, in His gracious mercy, the love, even of our frail hearts, the obedience even of our imperfect lives, if rendered humbly, in sincere reliance on the merits of our Saviour, will find acceptance in His sight. He will pardon what is done amiss, strengthen what is weak, supply what is wanting, of our sincere endeavours; giving, as one well says, not only the pardon, but the way to find it, and the eye to search for it, and the heart to desire it; and then, for Jesus' sake, accepting the unworthy offering, as though it were our own, and crowning it with blessings, which the heart fails to comprehend, and eternity cannot exhaust.

Thus does the Lord, in the works of His Creation, the ways of His Providence, and the wonders of His

grace, continually make His goodness pass before us. Let it be the theme of our lips, and the effort of our lives, to acknowledge it with gratitude and devotion, and to proclaim it, in holy obedience. To-day, our eyes have seen His goodness pass before us. It pours upon us, in deliverances and preservations, in bounties and indulgences, His unnumbered and unnoted gifts of Providence. It crowns them all with the abundant means of grace; with the transcendent hope of glory. What shall we render unto the Lord, for all the benefits that He hath done unto us? Shall we not receive the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord? Shall we not offer Him the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and pay our vows to Him, in the presence of all His people? Thus, through our lives, the goodness of the Lord shall fill our hearts with gratitude, and our mouths with praise. In death, it shall sustain us with its comforts, and console us with its peace. And, after death, its perfect consummation shall be found, when He who has guided us by His grace shall receive us into His glory: to be with Him, where there is fulness of joy, and pleasure for evermore.

Through all eternity, to Him,
A joyful song we'll raise;
And find eternity too short
To utter all His praise.

SERMON XXXVIII.

THE EVER-LIVING REDEEMER.

JOB XIX. 25.—I know that my Redeemer liveth.

Who has not heard these words? It may be, wafted up, to mingle, with the choirs of Heaven, on the divinest wings of Handel's minstrelsy. It may be, uttered, by the Pastor's deep-toned voice, as, with sad step and slow, he follows up the aisle, the ashes of the loved and lost. It may be, syllabled, with stammering tongue, by simple rustic, from the moss-grown grave-stone. "I know, that my Redeemer liveth." However uttered, or wherever heard, they are the clear and conquering key-note of our ransomed nature: as, prostrate, at the cross, it looks up, through the grave, to God. "I know, that my Redeemer liveth."

A REDEEMER IS NEEDED FOR US ;

THERE IS A REDEEMER ;

HE IS MY REDEEMER ;

HE LIVETH ;

I KNOW THAT HE LIVETH ;

HE LIVETH, TO MAKE INTERCESSION, FOR US.

HE LIVETH TO BE OUR JUDGE.

HE LIVETH TO REIGN OVER US, FOREVER.

A Redeemer is needed for us. We are in chains. Satan, in Eden, made the race his captives. We forge and fasten our own fetters. Socrates that could owe a cock to Esculapius. Cicero that could not see how any two of his own priests could look each other in the face without a smile. The hecatombs of heathenism. Stonehenge with a broad altar for the sacrifice of men. The self distortion and dismemberment of Buddhism. The parched corn that the Indians bury with their hunters. I might go on so, for a week. But what are all these, what are any of them, but the admission of a bondage; under which our nature groans? From which it cannot vindicate itself. Nor ever can be vindicated, was the judgment of wise Plato, till some one better than the race shall come; and bear its sins.

And such an one *has* come. *There is a Redeemer.* An infant was just cradled in a manger. The heavens had burned with an unwonted fire. The heavens had rung with an unwonted song. The heavens were fragrant with unwonted odours. The virgin-born perfumed them with His breath. Shepherds were there; ambassadors of Judaism. Wise men were there; ambassadors of Heathenism. Angels were there; ambassadors of Heaven. The old prophetic rapture is all realized. "Unto us a Child is born; unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulders: and His name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." And the song, which rang seven centuries before throughout Judea, now rings from angel

harps, throughout the world: "Glory be to God on high; and on earth, peace; good will towards men:" for "unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Sickness is on the earth. He goes about; and touches men: and they are cured. A weeping woman feels and owns her sins. He says, "thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." Lazarus is dead. He bids him back to life. But these are special mercies. These are local benefactions. *There is a cross set up.* The Maker of the world is hung upon it. He bleeds. He groans. He dies. It is the ransom of the world which He created. "Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth: for I am God and there is none else; and besides me there is no Saviour." *In a garden, there is a new grave.* It is of solid rock. It is covered with a rock; and sealed, and guarded; and, yet, the sleeper in it, is not there. He has arisen. It is the resurrection of the race, which He had made. "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." *It is the mountain Olivet.* The Crucified and Risen again is there, with His eleven. The heavens are opened. Angels descend. A cloud receives Him out of their sight. It is the restoration of the nature, which He adopted and redeemed. "When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive: and gave gifts to men: even for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

And, yet, He is *my* Redeemer, "He gave Himself a

ransom, for all." "He tasted death, for every man." His redemption was infinite, and yet it was individual. He died for all. And, yet, He died for me. There is none so poor, there is none so mean, there is none so bad, that He did not die for him. The chief of sinners can look up, and say, The Saviour died for me. It does not follow that I shall be saved. God knows. To be saved, I must not only be redeemed, but sanctified. To be sanctified, I must be one of the people of God. To be one of the people of God, I must repent, I must believe, I must be baptized. I am redeemed. All are. Shall I be saved? God knoweth. I shall not, if I am not holy. "Follow after holiness: without which no man shall see the Lord."

My Redeemer liveth. What were a dead redeemer? And yet He was dead. It was by His death that He overcame death. But any one can die. All sinners must. He did; Who knew no sin. But that He knew no sin, proved Him God. And being God, death could not keep Him dead: "declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead."

"I know that my Redeemer liveth." There is no clearer demonstration of any fact in history, than that my Redeemer died and rose again. At His cross, the world was gathered. Roman soldiers. Jewish priests. The loving John. The matchless Mary. Nor was his grave, less certain. Pilate's seal. The Roman guard. The Angels. Nor that the grave was empty. Those early women. The earlier angels. Peter and John.

The story of the Soldiers. His appearance to His chosen. The Lord's day, which is His perpetual memorial. The Church, which is His monument in all the world. This spire, towering, toward heaven. These grave-stones, witnesses of the immortal hope that is in Him. That garnered dust, which love so cherishes, which such tears consecrate, which wait, for Him in peace. Do I know my mother? Do I know my name? Do I know any thing? If I do, it is that my Redeemer liveth. That He liveth evermore, and that I live, in Him.

He liveth to make intercession for us. True, He died for us. True, His blood is the ransom for us all. But we are sinners, we are sufferers, yet. Only we are redeemed sinners, and redeemed sufferers. We still need to be comforted. We still need to be strengthened. We still need to be saved. For this He maketh intercession. He cannot bear that any sinner should be lost. He cannot bear that His blood should be shed in vain, for any sinner. Therefore, He standeth at the right hand of God. Therefore He pleads for us, the merits of His cross. He prays for grace, to strengthen us. He prays for consolation, to comfort us. He prays, for holiness to sanctify us. Oh what a blessedness this is. That He Who died for us, is still our Intercessor. As the beloved John has said: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," "who ever liveth, to make intercession for us."

He liveth to be our Judge. Such was the teaching of the angels on the mount of the ascension: "that same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner, as ye have seen Him go into heaven." In the sublime expression of the hymn *Te Deum*, "we believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge." Wonderful combination in Him who gave Himself for us; our Redeemer, our Intercessor, our Judge; to die for us, to plead for us, to judge us. Beloved, if the Redeemer die for us in vain, if the Intercessor plead for us in vain, what can we hope for, from the Judge? If the Lord will be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it? But there is mercy with Thee: therefore shalt Thou be feared.

He liveth, finally, to reign over us forever. At the ascension, He was crowned with glory for the suffering of death. From the Judgment, He shall return to wear His crown forever. And to share it with His faithful ones. Oh for the bliss and glory of that day,—such overpayment for the toils, the cares, the sufferings, the death, which wait us here,—when accepted in the Beloved, the Children of the King shall arise with Him, in His glorious and eternal kingdom. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever, be with the Lord."

“I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that he shall stand, at the latter day, upon the earth: and though, after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not another.” My brethren, what a perfect, glorious, triumphant confidence! That the soul *is* immortal! That the body *will* be raised. That the Redeemer will be there. That the eyes which kindled in a mother love, or melted at the sight of the first born, shall see Him as He is, and know Him for their own. And yet these words were said, it may be, twenty centuries before His coming in the flesh. Who would not trust in such a God? Who will not rejoice in the revelation of His love? Who will not cast himself upon His truth, and seek salvation in His love? I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. Oh, when the dawn shall break that shall fulfil the patriarch’s trust, how shall His burning words burst forth from every grave where dust has slept in hope, I know that my Redeemer liveth! How shall the sea send forth the dead that are in her, to join the exulting throng, I know that my Redeemer liveth. How shall the martyrs, from the furnace which was meant to burn their very ashes, burst forth in singing, and declare among the fires, I know that my Redeemer liveth. My beloved it *will* come, that awful, joyful day. So awful to the sinner. But so joyful to the saint. With which shall we be found, when that day dawns? And where shall our place be, through the eternity which shall come after? Who shall

abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? In his own strength not one! Nor any, but in Thine, Thou blessed Jesus, who hast died and risen again, and ever liveth to make intercession for us: and therefore unto Thee, Redeemer, Intercessor, Judge and Saviour, One with the Father and the Holy Ghost, shall ever be ascribed eternal glory and immortal praise.

SERMON XXXIX.

THE VICTORY OVER EVIL.

ROMANS XII. 21.—Be not overcome of evil: but overcome evil with good.

ST. PAUL is the greatest human teacher of morality. Indeed, he follows Jesus Christ so closely, that he is only not divine. No one else has gone so deeply, for the grounds of his instructions. No one else has built so wisely, and so well upon the true foundation. Take, for example, his Epistle to the Romans. It is a perfect exposition of the faith and ethics of the Gospel. It teaches every thing, that need be known, in order to salvation. In strict accordance with the requirements of the old logicians, it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. It begins, with showing what man is, by nature, through the Fall: sinful, wretched, helpless, lost. It goes on to show the merciful provision, which God has made, in Jesus Christ, for his redemption, restoration, and salvation. And it concludes, with full instructions, how to use these means of mercy, that their end may be secured. In the first eleven chapters, he declares the doctrines of the Gospel, in their noblest amplitude, and loftiest elevation. And, in the five,

which follow, sketches the Christian life, in its resulting duties, and consistent practice, with utmost power, and with inimitable beauty. The golden hinge, on which the system turns, which joins the doctrinal and practical together, that affecting passage, with which the latter portion opens, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies, a living, sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service : and be not conformed to this world ; but, be ye transformed, by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Not even the holiest life, if that were possible, available to salvation, but for these mercies of God, in Jesus Christ, in whom, we have redemption, through His blood. Nor, yet, that bleeding Cross, effectual to save, in any, who are not renewed to holiness. On the one hand, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin : " because "without faith it is impossible to please Him." On the other hand, "faith without works is dead ; " because "without holiness, no man shall see the Lord ; " and holiness, as the apostle teaches, in these five chapters, is not a vague abstraction, but the whole of holy living, or, as he specifies, with inimitable beauty, in another place, "love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

In the text, we have a fine example of the moral teaching of St. Paul, and on a point of deepest interest, the proper treatment of our enemies. Whether we shall *have* enemies, or not, does not depend entirely on ourselves. Nor, whether they shall persist in

being such. This, the context teaches : " If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably, with all men." It may not be possible. For, some men *will* have war. But, we can let them have it all, themselves ; and *not* be *their* enemies though *they* are *ours* : so that, as one well says, " on our part, there may be, always, peace." The Apostle now proceeds, with more detail. " Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves." Take not the law into your own hands. Be not, what every duellist must be, in will, if not in deed, a murderer and suicide, at once. " But, rather, give place unto wrath." Commit your case to God : and, as we read in Ecclesiasticus, " without being angry, give place to the law of the most High, to vindicate your cause." For, it is written, in the book of Deuteronomy, " To Me, belongeth vengeance, and recompence : " as the Apostle states it, " Vengeance is mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord." And, now, the exhortation grows more fervent, its tone, more godlike. We are not, simply not to hurt our enemies : we are to do them good. " Therefore," says the Apostle, quoting the proverb to enforce his earnestness, " Therefore, if thine enemy be hungry, give him bread, to eat, and if he be thirsty, give him water, to drink ; " " for, in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." Your persevering kindness, if he be not stone, will soften him, into tenderness, and melt him, into love.

" So artists melt the sullen ore of lead,
By heaping coals of fire upon its head :
In the kind warmth, the metal learns to glow,
And, pure from dross, the silver runs below."

And, then, the practical conclusion, perfect in Christian loveliness and beauty, which covers and comprehends, the whole : “ be not overcome of evil ; but overcome evil with good.”

I. BE NOT OVERCOME OF EVIL. WE ARE OVERCOME
OF EVIL,

WHEN WE ARE DEPRESSED BY IT ;

WHEN WE RESENT IT ;

WHEN WE RETURN EVIL FOR IT.

i. *Be not depressed by the evil which men attempt to do you.* It is, by no means, certain that they can do what they attempt. They may not have the power, or they may outwit themselves. Or, they may find that you are quite beyond their reach. Anybody can throw a stone. But everybody cannot hit. And sometimes, the thrower falls, by the violence of his own exertion. “The engineer hoised by his own petard.” David had many enemies. “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus,” must have. Not seldom, they fell into the pit which they had digged, for him ; and “the net, which they hid privily, caught themselves.” And there are higher grounds of consolation. There is a God, who ruleth in heaven, over all. And, if you trust, in Him, He will lay hand upon the shield and buckler : and stand up, to help you. Or, if your enemies, for a while, prevail, He will deliver you, from all their malice : and make your righteousness clear as the light, and your just dealing, as the noonday. Or, at any rate, though they make your life bitter with persecution, and hunt

you, with their hatred, into the grave; "*There*, the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest:" and, thence, you shall arise, at the dawning of the resurrection, to be with them, who took up their cross, and followed Christ, and, having shared in His sufferings, are partakers of His glory.

ii. *Do not resent the evil which men do to you.* Two wrongs are not one right. It will not make *their* sin the less, for you to sin. Resentment is a sin. Our Master never felt it. The Apostles never practised it. When He was reviled, He reviled not, again. And they took patiently the spoiling of their goods. Resentment leads to sin. One cannot fight, alone. Two can. From hot feelings, come harsh words. Harsh words are followed, by rough deeds. The place to stop is, before you have begun. Any one can call ill names. Any one can threaten. Any one can be a bully. Think of an angel, when you are tempted to resent an injury. Think of the Lord of angels, whom they accused of drunkenness, and buffeted, and spit upon. Think of a little child: which He set up, to be our pattern. Its gentleness, its patience, its very helplessness. How it smiles, in unsuspecting innocence, on its murderer: and is sent to heaven, by the hand, to which it clings.

iii. *Least of all, return evil, for the evil, which is done to you.* That is the brute instinct, and the way with brutal men. You are human. Be humane. It is the true courage. It is the conscious coward who strikes first, and he but owns himself another coward who strikes back. For courage lies not in the fist. It

is not, so much muscle, so much manhood: the more brawny, the more brave. Courage is of the head. Its victory is in endurance. A mastiff can attack, and tear. It takes a martyr to endure. And, that noble-minded Greek, who answered "Strike; but hear me;" or that first deacon, whose face shone, like an angel's, through the shower of stones: or that noble saying of Ignatius, "Stand like an anvil, when it is beaten upon;" or those heart-words of honest old Hugh Latimer, "Be of good cheer, brother Ridley, and play the man," are the exponents of a truer courage, and of more of it, than served to make up all the Alexanders, Cæsars, and Napoleons, that the world has ever heard of. Return no evil, for the evil that is done you. It is as manly as it is meek. It is more than that: it is Godlike. It springs from that confidence of superiority, which lifts the Christian man above the reach of evil, by making it impossible for him to do it. "If I have spoken evil," said the blessed Jesus, to the craven, who had struck Him—at the very moment when He might have summoned more than twelve legions of angels, to His aid—"If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but, if well, why smitest thou me?" The Godhead did not more reveal itself, when He said, "Lazarus, come forth!"

II. "Be not overcome of evil; but, overcome evil, with good." The appeal is here to that which is the noblest aim of man; which is God's nobleness; to overcome. "Overcome evil, with good." Evil is overcome, with good,

WHEN THOSE WHO DO IT ARE FORGIVEN;
ARE PRAYED FOR;
ARE REPAID WITH BLESSINGS.

i. *Overcome evil, with good, by forgiving those who do it.* Which is the greatest act of God, creation or redemption? When was the Godhead most adorable: when man was created, or when he was forgiven? The first took but a word. The second required the Cross. In the one, He spake, and it was done. For the other, He gave up His only-begotten Son. Where is the record, that sets forth with more sublimity the majesty of God, than the transaction with offending, but repenting David? "And David said, I have sinned against the Lord." "And Nathan said, The Lord also hath put away thy sin." And, when was Jesus ever more majestic, than, when He said to that poor woman, not one of whose accusers dared to cast a stone at her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin, no more." To be their conqueror, forgive your enemies.

ii. *Overcome evil with good, by praying for those who do it.* There is a greater sin, that they have wrought, than injuring you. They have offended God. They have broken His law; lost the godlikeness, that was in them; and incurred the sentence of His everlasting wrath. What will become of them? What *must* become of them, if they should die impenitent? Hasten to pray for them, as Jesus did. Nothing, in all the perfect beauty of His life so beautiful, as, when upon the Cross, He said—His revilers, His persecutors, His murderers, beneath Him, and before Him, His

heart's blood bursting from His pierced side, for their redemption—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" And, among our inimitable collects, nothing so inimitable, as that, appointed for St. Stephen's day: "Grant, O Lord, that, in all our sufferings here, upon earth, for the testimony of Thy truth, we may steadfastly look up to heaven, and, by faith, behold the glory that shall be revealed: and, being filled with the Holy Ghost, may learn to love and bless our persecutors, by the example of Thy first martyr, St. Stephen, who prayed for his murderers to Thee, O blessed Jesus, Who standest at the right hand of God, to succour all those, who suffer for Thee, our only Mediator and Advocate."

iii. *Overcome evil with good, by repaying it with blessings.* Who is He, that maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good? Who is He that sendeth rain, on the just, and on the unjust? Who is He, that commended His love to us, in that, "while we were sinners," and "enemies by wicked works," "Christ died for us?" Who would not be like God? And, in which of all His glorious attitudes and gracious aspects, as when He uses the power which might destroy them, to bless His enemies, and conquers them by love?

My beloved, the world's way is still blood for blood. Men claim the right to return injury, for injury. They glory in the power to do it. How does such conduct bear the light of that transcendent Scripture, "Why boastest thou thyself, thou tyrant, that thou canst do mischief? Whereas, the goodness of God endureth

yet, daily?" And how can such kneel down, and pray, as Jesus taught: "Forgive us our trespasses, *as* we forgive those who trespass against us?" Oh, my beloved, how that "*as*" will wring the conscience in the hour of death, and hurtle through the air of the great day of judgment, with the terrors of anticipated hell; as if the prayer had gone up to heaven reversed; and had its dread petition all fulfilled, "forgive us *not* our trespasses, as we forgive *not* those who trespass against us!" Remember what the Saviour answered Peter, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, until seventy times seven." Be guided by His precepts. Be conformed to His example. Restrain the injurious hand. Control the injurious tongue. Repress the injurious thought. Achieve, through grace, the double victory, over your enemies, and yourself. Among the ancient Romans, to save the life of a citizen was rewarded with the noblest of their honours, the civic crown. With what, shall he be crowned, who saves a soul from death? And, yet the prayer of love may win it, through the cross of Jesus Christ.

SERMON XL.

AN EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF.

ST. LUKE XVI. 31.—If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

THESE words conclude the Gospel for the day. A large conclusion, one might say, from premises, so simple: “there was a certain rich man,” “and there was a certain beggar.” What can the process be, by which, an introduction so entirely common, attains “the height of this great argument?” A simple exposition of the passage will suffice to make it plain. If I should state, in fewest words, the drift of the whole parable “The Rich man and Lazarus,” they would be those of our dear Lord, “What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen; and fared sumptuously every day.” Our Lord designs to sketch the perfect picture of all merely sensual enjoyment. It stands for that whole class, the aim and effort of whose being seem exhausted in the daily cry, “What shall we eat? And what shall we drink? And wherewithal shall we be

clothed?" The things themselves are not unlawful. God gives them richly to enjoy. The "purple and fine linen" might be the vesture of a saint. They were, when William Howley, the late Primate of all England, wore them. The daily sumptuous fare, by no necessity, involves intemperance or gluttony. Doubtless, they are temptations. As certainly, they are not sins. Nor does our Lord imply that this abundance was procured by fraud, or by oppression. He merely sets before us, what is seen too often, and, too often, only to be envied, a man that lives but for the present, and for self. The more or less of riches does not make the case. The fineness of the linen, or the richness of the fare. The point lies, in just living, for the present, and for self. To heighten it, by contrast, another figure is brought in. "And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed, with the crumbs which fell, from the rich man's table: moreover, the dogs came, and licked his sores." What an entire and perfect contrast! The rags and nakedness, with the fine linen and the purple. The lying, at the gate, with the luxurious palace. The coveted crumb, with the habitual feast. The sympathizing dog, with the disdainful man. How painful; yet, how perfect, is the picture! But, whatever be the difference of men, in station or condition, they have one thing common. "And it came to pass, that the beggar died; and was carried by the angels, into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried." Abraham was the father of the faithful. They were,

all, his children. As little ones, that weary with their play, or come home tired from school, or are afflicted with some childhood's grief, find rest and refuge on the fond, parental, breast, so do the humble and the holy, the "little ones" of Jesus, find their shelter, from the weariness and woes of life, in the bosom of Abraham, in the society of saints, amid the tranquil and serene abodes, where they have rest in God. It is the same, which in the sacred Scripture is presented under another figure of surpassing beauty, as Paradise, the garden of the Lord. Called, by whatever name, it is the resting-place of faithful souls, who wait, in patient hope, the morning of the Resurrection. Into this blessed haven, he whom the dogs attended, in his life, was borne, by angels, at his death. And, now, the contrast is reversed. The rich man, also, dies. No doubt, he has a splendid funeral: whatever that may weigh, against the angel-escort of the beggar. "And, in hell, he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus, in his bosom. And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me; and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue: for I am tormented, in this flame." The tongue, which was so delicately served, with the most sumptuous viands, and most costly wines, parched, for one drop of water; the body, which no linen was too fine, nor Tyrian purple rich enough, to wrap, enveloped, now, in flames; the beggar, who lay starving and unnoticed, at his gate, now, sought to, as a minister of mercy, for his misery! was ever contrast drawn, so

graphic and so fearful? And, then, the calm and quiet answer of the holy Patriarch: fearful and final, in its quiet calmness; "Son, remember, that thou, in thy lifetime, receivedst thy good things; and, likewise, Lazarus, evil things: but, now, he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And, besides all this, between us and you, there is a great gulf fixed: so that they, which would pass, from hence, to you, cannot; neither can they pass, to us, that would come, from thence." The appeal is made, direct, express, inevitable, to his own conscience. Didst not thou choose the life, that was? Hast thou not had thy choice? Canst thou have both? Shall Lazarus have neither? Would that be right? Can God do wrong? "Thy good things," thou hast had; and art tormented, now. The world, all, thine. Thy soul, forever, lost. His "evil things" were all on earth. His faith, his patience, his long-suffering, now, are comforted. And, it must be, forever, so. There is no interchange, between the righteous and the wicked. He cannot lose his bliss. Thou must endure thy woe. "So is he, who heapeth up treasures, to himself; and is not rich, towards God." So little, does it "profit a man, to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul."

What follows, while it is inimitable as a stroke of nature, was needful to the lesson of the parable; and makes the rich man's case a warning, to mankind. "Then, he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brothers; that he may testify unto them; lest, they, also, come into this place of torment." Though, lost,

himself, he would not that his brothers should be lost. He has discovered, all too late, the error of the Sadducees. He learns, by sad experience, that man has a soul; and, that there is a hell. He reaps, in wretchedness, the recklessness, which he has sown. He would warn them, before it is too late. And may there not be, still, a deeper thought? Were not these younger brethren? Had he not often told them, that the life that was, was all? Had he not mocked, before them, at the thought of an hereafter? Had not his whole life been a lesson, to their hearts, too aptly learned, too earnestly pursued: "let us eat and drink; for, to-morrow, we die?" "I pray thee, therefore, father"—the conscience, which was lulled, by luxury, on earth, quickened, to anguish, by remorse, in hell—"I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house, lest they, also, come unto this place of torment." "And Abraham saith, unto him, They have Moses and the Prophets: let them hear them." "And, he," remembering how he, himself, had disregarded them, "said, Nay father Abraham; but, if one went unto them, from the dead, they will repent." Could they but know the fearful things, which lie, beyond the grave, for unbelievers and the unrepentant; could they but see these flames, could they but feel this thirst, could they but hear the rattling of this parched tongue, "they will repent. And he said unto him. If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." If they resist the voice of God, no tongue of man, touched by whatever terrors, can arrest

them. It is "with the heart," that "man believeth unto righteousness:" and on them, who will not believe, even miracles were wasted.

The reply of Abraham, in the text, brings out the purpose of the parable, in the rebuke of unbelief. Not the metaphysical unbelief, which raises questions, about this, or that, which is revealed, and cavils at the Gospel, as hard sayings: but that, which wraps itself in sense; lives only for the present; derides the past; and disregards the future. In one plain word, which the apostle furnishes, "an evil *heart* of unbelief," in departing from the living God.

Taken in this sense, the parable is most extensive, in its application. It is for all, who live, unto themselves. It is for all, who do not live to God. It is for all, who seek not, first, the kingdom of God, and its righteousness. It does not need that they be "rich." It does not need that they be "clothed in purple and fine linen." It does not need that they "fare sumptuously, every day." These are all things, of more or less. They prove nothing. They are nothing. The question is, Do you walk by faith; or, do you walk by sight? Do you live to the present life, or do you live to the life that is to be? Do you serve the flesh, or do you serve the Spirit? Be assured of this, "He, that soweth to the flesh, shall, of the flesh, reap corruption." Only, "he that soweth to the Spirit," can, "of the Spirit, reap life everlasting." In the rich man and the beggar, these two classes are set forth with an inimitable truth.

It matters not whether he be a miser or a spend-

thrift. It matters not whether he bury or squander his treasures. It matters not whether he "rise early, and late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness;" or whether he live the life of the luxurious Sybarite, whose worst experience was a wrinkled rose-leaf, on his couch. If the aims of life be limited to earth; if the concerns of time exhaust its efforts; if it content itself with sense: that is the unbelief, which shuts the future out, and kills the soul. The body may be pampered. Rank and state may be attained, to move the envy of mankind. There may be power, at which the multitude shall tremble and turn pale. But there is nothing there, to satisfy the soul. There is nothing there, to reach beyond the grave. There is nothing there, that lays up treasures in the heavens. When the brief span of life is passed; and the long train of mimic mourners has swept by; and the green sod is beaten down upon the grave, with that worn spade: life's uses are all done. The flesh has reaped corruption. There remains the harvest of the worm. But, on the other hand, however poor, however low, however humble, however helpless; though despised of men, and left to the chance charity of dogs; if there be living faith, if there be patient hope, if there be yearning love, if there be wealth of soul, that lays its ventures out for the immortal, and sets its heart on God, no poverty, no obscurity, no infirmity, can do it any harm. It is at peace with man. It is at peace with God, through Jesus Christ. It reckons that "these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory,

that shall be revealed." The life, that it now lives, it lives "by the faith of the Son of God." The death, which it waits for, it accounts, as better, far, than life; since it will bring it to the Lord. And when it comes, the wings of angels are the spirit's escort to the Paradise of God; and its abode, in Paradise, with Abraham, and all saints, the pledge and foretaste of immortal joy, in Heaven.

Besides this great, pervading lesson, the parable abounds, with teachings of the deepest interest and import. It gives us one of the few glimpses, which the Gospel opens into the world unseen. It discloses, to us, the rest of the believer, the eternal unrest of the infidel. It brings one up to us, to tell us of the secrets of the prison-house: and to warn us to avoid the way, which leads to it. What that poor sufferer asked for, for his brethren, Christ has permitted now, to us: one comes unto us from the dead, that we may repent. To them, who patiently endure, "as seeing Him, who is invisible," He opens the serene abodes of Paradise; its crystal streams, its verdant shores, its towering palms; and seeks to win them, if they will, as weaned and wearied children, to the benign and blessed bosom of parental love. To them, who "seek their own," who live "unto the flesh," who set their hearts on things below, who have their treasure here on earth, He opens the abodes of darkness, in which the souls of them, who know not God, wait the dread hour which is to consummate their doom. No revelation, there, of purifying and remedial fires. No hope held out, that the last farthing may be paid, and

the sad soul set free. No trace of that most damnable delusion, that the devil yet has tried, upon the hearts of men, that all will, finally, be saved. "Between us and you," Christ says, by faithful Abraham, "there is a great gulf, fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither, can they pass to us, that would come from thence."

What a calm and cheerful light is thrown, from this instructive story, on the seeming inequalities of life! What more apparent to the superficial glance, than the beggar's wretchedness, the rich man's consolation! And, yet, in God's esteem, how different! The beggar has a name in heaven. The very angels call him Lazarus. They wait, while, yet, the dogs are comforting his sores, to snatch his spirit to its blessed abode. The rich man has no name. However the poor minions that embraced his feet might make the welkin ring, with it, it has not come to us. He stands, with all the herd of such as he was, as "a certain rich man." When he dies, his heirs, in decency, provide the funeral, which his coffers pay for. There are no traces of an angel's wing, upon the path which bears his body to the grave. And from the sleep of his long worthless life of selfishness and luxury, he wakes, in hell; an infidel, no more.

The parable discloses, with a ray of sun-light, the character and grounds of unbelief. God has not left Himself, without a witness, to our hearts. His revelation of Himself is clear, conclusive and irresistible, to all who will receive it. Faith is a moral act. The will and the affections must conspire with the understand-

ing. What unbelievers want, is not more evidence, but less self-will. They have not, because they ask not. They are hardened, "through the deceitfulness of sin." They will not believe, because they do not mean to obey. Tell them of a religion, which is to cost them nothing; which dispenses with humility; which comports with self-indulgence; which is easy towards sin; which makes compromise with the world: and they are convinced already. But preach the cross to them, and they reject it: not because the argument is inconclusive: but because the sacrifice is unacceptable. You vainly multiply for such, fulfilments of old prophecies. You vainly pile, for such, accumulated miracles. You vainly call, for such, a dead man, from his grave. "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." When the historic Lazarus was raised from the grave, the chief priests, so far from being convinced, only consulted how they might put him to death. And now, that the Raiser of Lazarus has Himself been raised, what multitudes, who own the wondrous truth, continue still, impenitent; and, still, withhold "the obedience of Faith."

Beloved brethren, I end, as I began. Were I to state the purpose of the parable, in fewest words, they would be those of our dear Lord, "What shall it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Ask your own hearts, each for himself, here, in God's sight, this fearful question. Think that the issue to it hangs upon a hair. To-day, you eat, you drink, you buy, you sell, you plant, you build. To-night, your

soul may be required of you. If it should be, would your awaking be, among the songs of angels, in the light of their benignant eyes, as they conduct you to the rest of Lazarus, beside the streams of living waters? Or would it be, where not one cooling drop can come? Dear brethren, while there is yet time, think upon these things! “In the hour of death and in the day of Judgment, good Lord, deliver us!”

SERMON XLI.

INDECISION.

NUMBERS XXII. 18.—If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord, my God, to do less or more.

THE story of Balaam furnished the second morning lesson, for last Sunday; and supplies both of them, for this. How strange, that the characters and incidents of thirty-three centuries ago should be brought up for instruction, to-day! How unlikely, that the deeds and words of a heathen king, and of a half barbarous soothsayer could have interest for a Christian congregation, in the nineteenth century. But man is always man. And, He who knows what is in man, has caused this story to be written, for our learning. And, in the wisdom of the Church, these portions of it are appointed for our present meditation. A wisdom, not without divine direction. Three several Apostles tell the history of Balaam. St. Peter, who describes him as “Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.” St. Jude, who pronounces a woe upon them, who have “gone in the way of Cain and run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished, in the gainsaying of Core.” And St. John, who writes to the church of Per-

gamos, "I have a few things against thee, because thou hast, there, them, that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel." And yet it is the same, from whose mouth, we have caught the text: "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord, my God, to do less or more." How inconsistent! How perplexing! How alarming the contrast, between the righteous purpose, and the unrighteous practice! Can it be he who said these noble words, that did such wicked deeds? Must it not rather be some fabled monster: the distortion of a sick man's dream? A brief consideration of the story will resolve these questions. It must mortify our pride. It may, by God's grace, minister to our profit. Let us ask it of His mercy.

"Balaam, the son of Beor," whom the Apostle Peter, by a change of letters, which takes place, when Hebrew names are rendered into Greek, has called "the son of Bosor," was a dweller in Aram or Mesopotamia, which means, *between the rivers*, the region lying between the Tigris and Euphrates. In the Book of Joshua, he is called a soothsayer: one of an order of men common in rude times, and often influential, with the small, not only, but the great. So, here, with Balak, King of Moab, who sends to him to say, "Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt." The approach of Israel had alarmed him. "Behold, they cover the face of the earth; and they abide over against me. Come, now, I pray thee, curse me this people: for they are too mighty

for me: peradventure, I shall prevail, that we may smite them, that I may drive them out of the land. For, I wot, that he, whom thou blessest, is blessed; and he, whom thou cursest, is cursed." It was common among heathen nations to invoke upon their foes the fury of the gods. Balaam's distinction as the prophet of the God of Israel, had created the impression that his influence was sure to be effectual. For though a dweller in a heathen land, and using a forbidden art, Balaam acknowledged the true God, and professed to serve Him. Hence his reply to Balak's messengers, "Lodge here, this night, and I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak unto me." The answer of the Lord was, "Thou shalt not go with them, thou shalt not curse the people; for they are blessed." So the messengers went back, with his refusal. But Balak was not so put off. He had learned, with Walpole, that, at some price, every man may be secured. He sent, therefore, yet, again, princes more, and more honourable. "Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming to me, for I will promote thee to very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest to me. Come, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people." Then followed the noble declaration of the text: "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord, my God, to do less or more:" and if it had uttered the unfaltering purpose of religious principle, it would have challenged for him the testimony which was borne once to a Roman soldier, "You shall sooner turn the sun out of his track, than Fabricius from

his integrity." But it was not so. He was inclined to go. And, in the wicked hope, that the Unchangeable might change, he adds: "now, therefore, tarry ye here, also, this night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more." So easy it is, when the heart is half inclined to do an evil thing, to turn the scale, and do it. It is among the trials of our fallen nature. As we bear them, the result will be. These are the moments which decide our being. To yield, is ruin. To resist, is glory. And it is often but one moment that decides it. If Balaam had added nothing to the text, the messengers would have gone off; and he, stood firm. He faltered. He would think of it again. He would go to the Lord, once more. And he was lost. It is the old proverb: "the castle, which parleys, will be taken." There is a lesson, here, for all. In questions about duty, second thoughts are seldom best. For the most part God has made the path so plain, that we can see our way, at once. We should distrust the disposition which inclines us to reverse our first decision. We have evil hearts. It is a tempting world. "That which is called, considering our duty," one wisely says, "is, for the most part, the way to get rid of it." So it was with Balaam. And he made it worse, by the attempt to win God over to the wrong: "tarry ye, also, here this night, that I may know what the Lord will say to me more." What *could* the Lord say more? "Thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed." He might have known it was so. Could he forget the blessing upon Abraham? "I will bless them that bless thee, and

curse them that curse thee, and in thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed." Could he forget the blessing upon Jacob? "Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed is he that blesseth thee." Did he not know that the Lord was not a man, that He should lie; nor the son of man, that He should repent? That change what might, He could not? But "the rewards of divination" were in his hand. And the house full of gold was in his heart. And visions of great honour flitted before his sight; and, by the spell of such a sorcery, memory failed, and knowledge ceased to know, and nothing could stand out, but that most holy fear of God, which springs from loving Him. Come in whatever shape, they may, shun "the rewards of divination." Like the king's bounty, whoever takes them, must serve out his time. Do not listen to the promises of wicked men. Do not so much as look upon the splendours of the wicked world. They fascinate the sense. They captivate the heart. They steal into the soul, and lead it captive, at its will. The single safety is the wise man's precept, "avoid it; pass not by it; turn from it; and pass away." In Balaam's case, the vain pretence, to seek the Lord, did not avert the evil. The Lord permitted him to go. Only requiring, that he should say no more, than He should put into his mouth. Thus, there is danger in our very prayers to God; unless our heart be right with Him. True, as it is, that He does not desire the death of any sinner, but that he turn and live; it cannot be, against his will. If we were not free to do wrong, we were not, to do right. But,

the service of God is perfect freedom. He accepts none but a willing heart. The case of Balaam is thus, an ordinary case. When men are bent on covetousness or on ambition, and disregard known principles of duty, He leaves them to their own hearts' lusts. After the first prohibition, the course of Balaam's duty was to treat no more with the ambassadors. But his heart was in the bribes. He would be rich, and, so, he fell into a snare. His was the sorest curse God ever sends, to have his will, and go his own way to destruction. But, to curse the Israelites is, still, beyond his reach. "If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them: but, yet, the word, which *I* shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do." That, though God gave permission, He changed not, is clear from this, that God's anger was kindled, because he went. But, still, His compassions were not clean gone. Bad as the conduct of the Prophet was, God bears with him. "So the angel of the Lord stood in the way, for an adversary against him." What a lesson of the tender love of God! What a reproof of our unworthiness! Which of us can tell, how often his way to destruction has been stopped, by unseen angels? How appalling—yet, if we will, how comforting—the thought, that they "are all ministering spirits, sent forth, to minister to them, who shall be heirs of salvation!" In the irritable, and, at last, the cruel conduct of one who clearly was a tender-hearted man, how vivid an illustration, of the influence of an evil conscience on the temper! He vents his dissatisfaction with himself, on the poor beast, on which he

rode! How many visit, on their families and their dependents, the disquiet of their own evil wills! We have an instance, here, of the small profit of compelled convictions. A double miracle was wrought, in Balaam's case, and, yet, when the dumb ass, speaking with man's voice, has rebuked his madness, and his eyes have seen the angel of the Lord, what does he say? "I have sinned, for I knew not, that thou stoodest in the way against me: now, therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again." What a strange comment on the repeated declarations of the divine displeasure! If he had been really penitent, would he have employed an "if?" Like the converted prodigal, would he not have risen at once, and gone? But his heart was on the bribes. And, as he was not compelled to go back; he went with the princes of Balak.

The miracle here recorded has been turned to ridicule by some, who, because they were infidels, supposed themselves philosophers; and they have laboured hard to prove that the organs of an ass are not fitted for articulate speech. Of course they are not. And herein lies the miracle. "The Lord opened the mouth of the ass." Why not? Did He not make man out of the dust of the ground? Is that less wonderful? What does one born mute know of the fitness of the human organs, for speech? In God's hands every thing is easy. An ass may utter oracles: while prophets marvel; and philosophers, stand mute.

What a delusion his, who, in the heathen camp, with purposes so utterly against the will of God, could utter

that devout petition, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" How wonderful God's dealings, to employ the mouth of such a man, to utter prophecies so eloquent; and so amazing in their fulfilment! A striking lesson, how He uses whom He will, and makes the wrath of man to praise Him! And what an end of a career so strange! Desiring to die the death of the righteous, and yet, first enticing God's people into fearful crimes: and then perishing by the sword of their avenging armies, among the princes, to whom he sold his soul! What must his thoughts have been, as he lay bleeding, on the plains of Midian! The promise of great honour; how sadly it betrayed him. The house full of silver and gold: how it mocked his mortal agonies. Oh, that he had resisted when he might! Oh, that he had persisted in that noble resolution! Oh, that he had lived the life of the righteous! Beloved, let us improve the lesson! Let us pray God for His prevailing grace, to make us wise in time!

The employment of so bad a man, to utter prophecies of truth, seems to be strange. But God's gifts, in nature and in grace, are given to many, who abuse them. No man is worthy of the least of all God's mercies. How much less of a prophet's or apostle's trust. Yet Moses and Aaron, Miriam and David, Judas and Peter are examples of its possession, by them who did not always, as became it. The lesson is that God is over all. That He uses, whom He will. That all are free to improve or to abuse their trust. Eternal honour,

to the man, by whom the smallest service shall be faithfully discharged. Eternal shame, to him, by whom it shall be wilfully betrayed.

In Balaam, we have a man, with purposes of honesty and piety : but with an overweening love of honours and enjoyments. He would combine the two. He would serve God and Mammon. He would keep the favour of heaven ; and not lose the patronage of Balak. Had it been honestly attainable, it might have been lawfully pursued. But, it was the wages of unrighteousness : and to wish for it, was sin. He never had the prize for which he sold his soul. If he had, a guilty conscience would have prevented his enjoyment of it.

The course of Balaam powerfully enforces decision in religion. It was the exhortation of that good man, the Apostle Barnabas, to the saints at Antioch, that, "with purpose of heart, they should cleave unto the Lord." There never was a more fitting exhortation. No other way is certain. The moment you doubt, your resolution is in danger. You will make allowance for circumstances. You will magnify difficulties. You will overrate temptations. You will underrate your duty. Until, at last, the requirements of religion are explained away, and the obligation of obedience has vanished. Hence the necessity of constant self-examination. Hence the duty of continual prayer. "Who can tell how oft he offendeth ?" "Look well if there be any way of wickedness, in me ; and lead me in the way everlasting."

Who would not say with Balaam, "Let me die the death of the righteous?" And yet how few secure its only hope, in living a religious life! But God has joined them together; and man cannot put them asunder. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap. To die the death of the righteous, we must fear God, and keep His commandments. There must be faith in Christ. And faith must work by love. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath life: but he that believeth not the Son of God shall not see life." "Keep innocency and take heed unto the thing that is right; for that shall bring a man peace, at the last." So shall you die the death of the righteous; and your last end be like his. Grant it, to us, God of our Salvation, for Thy mercies' sake in Jesus Christ! And unto Him, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, shall all the glory be ascribed.

SERMON XLII.

THE SINNER'S PLEA.

LUKE XVII. 13.—Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

JESUS was on His walks of mercy. Not even Samaria was beyond the reach of His benevolence. He was Himself, that good Samaritan who found a neighbour always, where He found a man. There met Him, on His way, a company of lepers. In them, beyond all others, the seal of sin was set, in loathsomeness, and wretchedness, and isolation. The leper was the fearful incarnation of the loss and ruin of the Fall. But the lost, He came to seek, and the ruined, to repair. And, that no soul of man might ever doubt His mercy, He cared for lepers too. They came to Him, with the instinct of misery; and, with its mournful cry for mercy, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” “And, when He saw them, He said unto them, Go, show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.” These words are from the Gospel for the day. So much was never said in fewer. The lepers’ case disposed of: and, in it, yours and mine.

I. Take notice, first, of their condition. They were helpless. They were hopeless of all refuge or relief. The leprosy was God's reserved case; with which He dealt alone. And, that it might be felt the more, and fill all souls with a more just conviction of the guilt and misery of sin, which found, in it, its liveliest image, out of hell, the leper was cut off from all approach to all his kind. His access to the priest was not to obtain a cure; but to be certified, that God had cured him. In this respect they represent us all. We are all spiritual lepers. We are born in sin. We live in sin. Left to ourselves, we die in sin. "Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin, hath my mother conceived me." "There is no man, that liveth, and sinneth not;" "and, in many things, we offend all." "The soul, that sinneth, it shall die." Such is the short statement of our case. The lepers stand for all of us.

But, even the lepers are not left, to die, in all their leprosy. As they go, roaming through the land, a brotherhood of wretchedness and ruin, they meet with Jesus. "As He entered into a certain village, there met Him ten men, that were lepers." It was a blessed providence, that turned their steps that way. He mixes all His chastisements with mercy. He hurts: but, then, He heals. He bruises: but He skills and hastes, to bind. And, so, with us, however little we may think about it. What mercy, to be born in Christian times! What mercy, to be brought up in a Christian land! What mercy, to have heard the blessed Gospel! What mercy, to find shelter in the holy

Church! What were the lepers, what were we, but that the Saviour met us?

II. Take notice, then, of their approach. "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" What words of weakness and of want! Jesus, the only Saviour and our Master, see us helpless; and in mercy, heal us, who are hopeless of ourselves, and perish, but for Thee! Are they our words, dear brethren; as they describe our case? Is it so, that we approach the Saviour? Is it so, that we renounce all merit, in ourselves? Is it so, that we plead mercy, only; as the sinner's only plea? Is it so, that we cast all on Christ: and hang ourselves, with Him, upon His cross; as the sole refuge of our race, sole rescue of our souls?

"Other refuge have I none;
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee:
Leave, ah! leave, me not alone;
Still support and comfort me!"

The very words put into all our mouths, by our dear spiritual mother, "We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry, for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us, the burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father: for Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake; forgive us all that is past." Words, which the heart can never utter, that the Saviour does not hear them. As when David said, "I have sinned against the Lord;" the answer was, "The Lord, also, hath put away thy sin!"

III. Take notice, then, how they were answered by the Saviour. He does not say, as in another case, "I will; be thou clean!" He takes no notice of their prayer, directly; nay, in His answer to it, there seems, to human ears, a disregard of it, not merely, but an inconsistency with its petition. "And, when He saw them, He said unto them, Go, show yourselves to the priests." "When, as yet there were no signs of restoration upon them," one says, "they were bidden to do that, which implied that they were perfectly cleansed; to take a journey, which would have been ridiculous, unless Christ's words proved true." Is it not so, precisely, that He deals with us? We come to Him, as sinners, to escape the doom, which overhangs our souls: "What shall we do to be saved?" His answer is, "Arise, and be baptized." "Go, show yourselves to the priests." "We come to Him again, groaning and yearning, with the pangs of that infection of our nature, which remains, even, in the regenerate, also. His answer is, "This is my blood which is shed for you, for the remission of your sins: drink ye all of this." "Go show yourselves to the priests." The daily burden of our lives still overtakes our strength. We fall, in daily sins. We come to Him, distressed, discouraged; almost in despair: "Save, Lord; or we perish." His answer still remains the same: "Go, show yourselves to the priests." According, as He said unto the Twelve; and, in all after time, to all, who hold, from them, the care of souls: "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are re-

tained." He interposes, not, direct, from heaven, in answer to our prayers. His work of mercy and of grace is done, by means. He makes His Church the medium of salvation, by the Cross. He bids the seeker for it, go to them, whom He ordains and blesses as His ministers of pardon and of comfort, the ministers and stewards of His mysteries.

IV. Observe then, finally, their conduct and its issue. The record does not even stop, to say, they went. The blessing is so prompt, on their obedient faith, that the same sentence answers for the fact, and its results. "It came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed." They did not stop, to say, "Why, Lord, the priests are only for the cleansed, to certify their cleansing: and we are, still unclean!" They did not stop to say, "Of what use can the priests be while the leprosy is on?" They did not stop, to speak. They did not even stop, to think. They went. They did as they were bidden. And, in doing as He directed, they found what they desired. Beautiful illustration of the unmeasured progress of omnipotence! No time is named. No stage is marked. No mode is spoken of. They go; and they are well. It is no more sublime to say, "Let there be light; and there was light." "And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed." Only omnipotence can do these things. And inspiration, only, can record them. My brethren, it is to this point, that I especially direct your thoughts. The lesson is for you. You come to Jesus Christ, to have your sins

forgiven. He bids you be baptized. You say, "How can this meet my case? I need forgiveness; and, not, baptism." When, if you had the leper's faith, and acted on it, and arose and went, and were baptized; it would come to pass, that, as you went, you would be forgiven. Again, you come to Jesus Christ, for grace and peace. He bids you "Take, eat; this is My body, which is broken for you." "Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him." You say, "How can these things be? I come, for spiritual, not, for carnal things. I need, not, bread and wine; but, grace and peace." When, if you had the leper's faith, and acted on it; and came, and took this holy sacrament, with prayer and penitence, it would come to pass, that, as you came, you would find comfort and salvation. He would, "pardon and deliver you, from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you, in all goodness; and bring you to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

My beloved brethren, the struggle of our spiritual nature is the struggle between sight and faith. We require to see before we believe; to know, before we do. It is this, which subjects us to the flesh. It is this, which binds us to the earth. It is this, which ties us to our sins. We must arise and go; or we shall never reach our homes. We must arise at His mere word, and go, at His mere will; or, we shall never, find our rest. It needs no strength. It needs no goodness. It needs no worth. If it did, our case were lost. It needs but the one strong conviction, that we are destitute of

all. It is the sick, that goes to the physician ; because it is the sick, that needs him. It is the child that clings to the maternal bosom ; because it is the child that must depend upon it. All that it needs, in us, is the sense, that "there is no health in us." All that it needs, in us, is the knowledge, that we are helpless. "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us," is its complaint. "And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed," is the record of His reply.

And how beautiful an illustration of the utter want of merit, on their part ! It could be nothing, in themselves, that wrought it. For they could not think that, in that way, it was possible. All that they had to do, was to believe, and to obey. They did that, and then all was done. "It came to pass that, as they went, they were cleansed." So, you, beloved, do, as He directs. Inquire not of *the why*. Inquire not of *the how*. Object not your unworthiness. Object not our infirmity. Say, with your hearts, "I have sinned against the Lord." And He will say, "the Lord, also, hath put away your sins." Do with your heart, what He ordains for you to do. And it shall come to pass, that, doing it, you shall be saved, through Him.

SERMON XLIII.

SALVATION, OF GOD, BY APPOINTED MEANS.

ST. JOHN IX. 1.—And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth.

WITH what variety of teaching do the Holy Scriptures teem ! How striking all, each in its way ; and singular in beauty ! The lesson comes to us, at one time, in the graphic history of mighty nations, at whose name the world has trembled ; at another, in some simple household story, as of Martha, and her sister, Mary. It is now some strain of radiant prophecy, that may take in a hundred generations ; and now a parable of one who had a hundred sheep. A proverb here ; and there a psalm. The awful teachings of the mount that burned with fire, or the low breathings of the Saviour's gentle voice, in the immediate ear of the disciple whom He loved. I could as well exhaust in my enumeration the aspects of what men call nature, in the changes of the seasons, and in all the wonderful vicissitudes of light and shade, as the variety of teaching, which in Holy Scripture seeks to hold the heedless ear, and win the wilful heart.

The Scripture, which supplies my lesson for this morning, is the record of the man who was blind from his birth, whom Jesus made to see. It is a simple story, but filled full of high instruction. I shall pursue it simply; and can bring out but a portion of the sacred truth which it reveals.

It was the Sabbath-day. But Jesus never rested from His work of love. The last we read of Him before, was the attempt to stone Him in the temple, when He went uninjured, through the midst of them—whether invisibly, or they spell-bound by the mere aspect of His majesty—and so passed by. But no ingratitude of men, no malice, no persecution, could turn Him from His track of truth and tenderness. “And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man, which was blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him”—so prompt at finding fault men are, and ready to read judgments from the Lord in the calamity of every neighbour—“saying, Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” The doctrine of the transmigration of the soul, so that it bears in one state the penalty of sins committed in a former, was current then, as still it is, in all the East. Is it some sin of his committed in another stage of being, which now overtakes him with its curse? Or is it that the parents’ sins are visited upon their child? Mildly, but plainly Jesus rebukes their want of charity. “Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents”—this is no proof of God’s displeasure for his parents’ sins, however great they may have been, but in the ordinary course of providence, so

far as they are all concerned ; and yet designed to testify of Me, that I am sent from God—"that," by My hand, "the works of God should be made manifest in him." And then, that touching lesson of the use of time ; which there are some profane enough to talk of killing, to get rid of it ! "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day"—it was about six months now before His crucifixion—"the night cometh, when no man can work." "When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay ; and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came, seeing." How wonderful in its simplicity, this sacred narrative of a transaction so remarkable ! How perfectly in keeping with the majesty of Him who wrought the cure ! How utterly removed from human capability—as much so, we may almost say, as the strange miracle itself—the selection of such means, the quiet use of them, the unpretending record of their issue ! The neighbours are naturally surprised. They know not what to make of it. They almost doubt if this can be the beggar, that beset their daily path. He had made no show of application for a cure. It does not seem that he had even known the Lord. No trumpet had been blown, to blaze the miracle abroad. The opening of his eyes—the light of mind illumining a face which was before all blank—so changed his whole appearance, that they ask in doubt, "Is not this he that sat, and begged ?

Some said, This is he. Others said, He is like him. But he said, I am he." They ask him of his cure. He answers them with perfect artlessness, "A man, that is called Jesus, made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash, and I went, and washed, and I received sight." How vast in its importance! How beautiful in its simplicity! Would not one say, how certain to secure for Jesus Christ, the wonderful, the merciful, an universal acceptance!

Alas, to think so, one must know but little of the human heart! When has a real benefactor of the race been known and owned as such? Did not our own Washington live to be traduced? It has been said, as truly as severely, that men cannot endure the load of a great obligation; and strive to rid them of it by getting rid of him who has conferred it. It certainly was so with the divine Benefactor of mankind, who came unto His own, and His own received Him not. The neighbours "brought to the Pharisees him that was aforetime blind." Should not they, the heads and teachers of the people, have rejoiced in such a mercy to their suffering countrymen? Should not they, the heads and teachers of the people, be the first to seek the gracious Patron of their neighbourhood? Should not they, the heads and teachers of the people, be the first to own in Him who did such miracles, the Sent of God, the true Messiah whom their fathers longed to see? Alas, not such is human nature! So far from rejoicing in the mercy, they turn it to malignant hate.

So far from acknowledging the miracle, they grudge that it was wrought upon the Sabbath. In vain the repetition, in their hearing, of the wondrous cure. "He put clay upon my eyes, and I washed, and do see." "This man," they say, "is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath-day." Their madness blinds them to the argument which, with unbiassed minds is perfectly conclusive, "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" as Nicodemus framed it, "No man can do such miracles as thou doest, except God be with him." It shows that evidence alone is not sufficient to convince. It shows that no amount of evidence can overcome the will. They follow up the subject. Not contented to accuse the blessed Jesus as a sinner, they are bent on His conviction. And such consummate meanness! To extort conviction from the very mouth of him in whom so great a mercy had been wrought, and wreak their own malignity through his ingratitude! "They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of Him, that He hath opened thine eyes?" He answered, with noble fearlessness, "He is a prophet." If he were, let it be noted here, the charge about the Sabbath-day would fall; since they agreed that a prophet might dispense with its requirements. Thus foiled, they try another tack. Malice is fertile of expedients. If it cannot crucify the Christ for blasphemy, it will for treason. They affect denial of the miracle. That the man before them, sees, they must admit. But then he always saw! It is a fraud attempted on the people. This is not he that sat and begged. They

will establish this by witnesses that cannot be disputed, his own parents. They call and question them. Is this your son? It is. Who you say was born blind? He was. How then doth he now see? Alas, for human gratitude! To this they make no answer. They feared the Jews. And by that fear the impulse of parental love was stilled, and the voice, stifled that should have burst into a strain of fearless praise, to fill the world: "By what means he now seeth we know not, or who hath opened his eyes we know not; he is of age, ask him!" "For the Jews had agreed already,"—so vainly do men strive to crush the truth by clamour or constraint—"that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue." But though a traitor to the benefactor of their child, these craven parents had completely settled the question of his identity. That never could be raised again. Does it convince the Pharisees? When was a man ever convinced against his will? Not disconcerted in the least, they call him up again. They strive to awe or to entrap him. Be honest now. Give God the praise! We know that this man is a sinner; and so do you, would you but own it! How beautiful his answer, in mingled modesty and firmness! He will not set himself above his teachers, to know more than they. And yet he will not deny his friend. "Whether He be a sinner or no, I know not;" it is not for me to say: "one thing I know"—and that enough for me—"that whereas I was blind, now I see!" They still pursue him with their questions, Why? How? When? Where? What? They might

perhaps entrap him in his talk. Bold in the truth, and in the indignation of a conscious innocence, he answers, I have told you once : why will ye hear it again ? “ Will you also be His disciples ? ” Then they reviled him ; as men will, that have no arguments to offer, and call hard names when they can bring no proofs. “ Thou art His disciple ; but we are Moses’ disciples ; we know that God spake by Moses ; as for this fellow, we know not whence He is. ” Their passion overreached itself. They not know, the teachers of the people, the Pharisees, the men of all the knowledge and of all the piety ! The man retorted most conclusively, and shut their mouths. “ Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence He is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes ! Now we know that God heareth not sinners ; but if any man be a worshipper of God, him He heareth. Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, He could do nothing ! They answered and said ”—what better could they do ?—“ thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us ? ” And, supplying by mere brute force what reason could not yield, they cast him out ; they excommunicated him.

It was a grievous thing to be cut off from the communion of his fathers. And so the blind man felt. The gracious Sympathizer felt it too ; and sought him in his solitude. “ Jesus heard that he had been cast out ; and when He had found him, He said unto him, Dost thou believe in the Son of God ? He answered and said,

Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? And Jesus said, Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him."

You cannot but have noticed, how strikingly in parallel this is, with that which is familiar to you all, the story of Naaman. The time does not permit me to point out the instances. Nor need I do it. It is better that you should do it for yourselves. It was by searching the Scriptures, that the Bereans won from the Evangelist the praise of being noble. A point or two, I shall but briefly indicate.

Both passages illustrate the merciful goodness of God. There was no disease so loathsome or so painful as the leprosy. And what privation to be compared in human estimate with loss of sight? A man born blind! Never to have looked on the enamelled earth, when at the footsteps of the Spring, the flowers start up in beauty and in bloom! Never to have looked upon the woods, when at the touch of frost, they take the dying dolphin's hues! Never to have seen the gorgeous glory of our western skies! Never to have seen the clear and cloudless splendour of a winter night! Never to have felt the mild, benignant beauty of a mother's face! And yet, for such calamity, there was an adequate deliverance. The leprosy must cease, at the sure word of God, by His own prophet. And He that said, Let there be light, at first, could pour its blessing upon sightless eyes.

In both the cases, means are used, and simplest means. A man born blind had never been restored to

sight by any human skill. It was not till 1728 that surgery attained to such perfection in the hands of Dr. Cheselden, as to accomplish it. Yet at the touch of Jesus, clay and water are sufficient: "A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes." Why should the arm of God be shortened? Why should the blessing be denied to simplest means that He ordains? Why, with such cases as these two on record, should any cavil at the use of sacramental agencies? Or turn from Jesus, when He takes the bread, and says, "This is My body;" and takes the cup, with, "Drink ye all of this, for this is My blood, which is shed for the remission of your sins?"

In both cases, washing is adopted, as the agency for the divine result. "Go, wash in Jordan seven times." "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." "And he went down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, and his flesh came unto him as the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." "He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing." Was it not so that Ananias said to Saul, Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins? And did he not arise, and was baptized?

In both cases the result followed the compliance, and not the mere disposition to comply. Naaman was not cleansed when he yielded to the expostulation of his servants, which was his change from rage to gentleness, from passion to reason, from self-will to self-surrender. But when he had dipped himself seven times in Jordan. The blind man did not receive his sight when he first started, in faithful obedience to the Saviour's word, to go to Siloam, but when he had been there and washed.

Saul had not washed away his sins, when he had said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—and surely faith could say no more—but when he had arisen and been baptized. As Jesus said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Finally, the use of means, in both these cases, as it could be nothing but by God's appointment, so it was nothing but on man's submission. Naaman went down and dipped himself seven times in Jordan. The blind man went and washed. Saul arose and was baptized. So Jesus said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." So Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." So Paul said, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you, both to will and do of His good pleasure." No, my beloved brethren, there is no encouragement in any lesson of the Bible, or in any office of the Church, for that which was alleged against apostles, as their teaching, Let us continue in sin, that grace may abound. Naaman might be washed of his leprosy, and die in his sins. The blind man might have his eyes opened, and go groping through eternity. Paul might preach to others, and be himself a castaway. On every page of the Gospel, on every portal of the Church, it is written, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." "Except ye humble yourselves and become as little children, ye

cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." Beautifully, is this spirit of a little child set forth, in the behaviour of the blind man. He did not know his benefactor. He well concluded from His miraculous power, that He must be a prophet. More was not given him. But when Jesus came to him, after they had cast him out, and said, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"—he said, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" And when Jesus told him it was He, he said at once, "Lord, I believe," and worshipped Him. This is the faith that justifies. This is their spirit, to whom salvation is assured. In such, baptismal water, through the heavenly grace, works out its gracious end. To such, the bread and wine, by sacramental grace, become the blood and body of the Lord, for meat indeed and drink indeed. These take the Saviour at His word. These own Him for their Prince, as well as Saviour. These worship Him as God and Lord, with body and with spirit, which are His. Lord, I believe, these say : help Thou my unbelief.

Beloved brethren, in whose ears these things are said, year after year, without effect ; before whose eyes baptismal water and the eucharistic emblems, plead in vain the blood and merits of the Lamb, there is for you, in the conclusion of this story, a solemn, searching lesson. "And Jesus said, For judgment am I come into the world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind." And some of the Pharisees which were with Him heard these words, and said unto Him, in their accustomed spiritual

pride, "Are we blind also?" Jesus said unto them, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." The blessed Jesus is to come again to judgment: and you, as then the Pharisees, must stand before His searching eye. If you reject His invitation now, and disregard His Gospel, and refuse His sacraments, can you then plead the want of opportunity to see? Will He not then say, If you had been blind, you would have had no sin? Must He not say, You said you saw: therefore your sin remaineth? Remaineth,—oh, to think of it!—through an eternity of wild remorse.

SERMON XLIV.

THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

ST. LUKE XVIII. 13.—And the Publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

How perfect is this picture! Does not the subject of it live and breathe before your eyes! What is there wanting to the painter, but the pencil and the canvass? As Mr. Greswell says, “the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, short as it is, is conspicuous for the simplicity of its narrative, and the force and liveliness of its delineation of character; in which respect it is so perfect of its kind, that it may be said rather to paint than to describe; and conveys as clear an idea to our imaginations, as the most finished picture would have done to our senses.”

The figures in this picture, it hardly need be said, are representatives of classes. At the same time, it would be a great mistake to think, that all the Pharisees or all the Publicans were such as these. Gamaliel was a Pharisee. And there were Publicans, whose gross extortion brought contempt upon the name. Our Lord

would intimate, that the very privileges of the Pharisee were dangerous. His higher knowledge of the Law was a temptation to self-esteem. From self-esteem to self-righteousness, the road is short and easy. The text *he* needed to consider was St. Paul's, "Knowledge, mere knowledge," puffeth up: it is "charity" that "edifieth." Again, He would intimate that classes of men are not to be condemned, in mass. That many a man is better than his position; though more, it must be admitted, worse. The text, for this example, is that short dialogue of Philip and Nathanael: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Come, and see!"

The persons of the parable are thus antagonistic in their character. They are opposites personified. And, yet, they have much in common. They are Jews. They are frequenters of the Temple. They are men that pray. It is no parable for heathen. The parties to it recognize the duty of religious worship, and act upon it. They go to the Temple; and they go to pray. In this respect, they are an example to too many, that claim the name of Christian. How many such there are, who never come to church. Of course, no sermon ever reaches them. Nor will, till the archangel preaches; and the judgment trumpet startles, whom the church-bell never drew. Them we must leave, till then; unless God send them to us, by the thunder of His Providence, or, by the still small voice of His in-working Spirit. But, of you that come to church, how many come to pray? Oh, what a revelation that would be, which should unroof a Church; and lay the hearts

all open, that are in it, with the motives which have brought them ! The itching ear : perhaps the itching palm ; making a gain of godliness, or willing to be had in reputation with the people ! To spend a listless hour ! To be seen, or see ! Of envy and strife : as some preached Christ of old ! Not to be singular ! To be in the fashion ! Or, perhaps, without a thought ! Few of the sad variety, that do not think themselves far better than the Pharisee ; and wonder, *he* could be so inconsistent. Yet, so it was ; our Lord has said it : he went up to the Temple, and he went, to pray. “Two men went up to the Temple, to pray ; the one, a Pharisee, and the other, a Publican !”

“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus, with himself.” There is nothing significant, in the posture of the Pharisee ; for the Publican, also, stood ; though there seems to be, in his position. The very name of “Pharisee” means *separatist* ; as if it said, “Stand by thyself, I am holier than thou ;” and in his prayer, he acts it. He isolates himself. He will not mingle with the herd of sinners. As if the Church were not God’s house, and all that come to it, His children : and, so, equal, in their rights ; and there, at least, in rank. Most surely if there be a place, where pride is the most odious, and vanity the most disgusting, it is here. Here, where we come, to pray. Here, where we come, for pardon. Here, where we come, through mercy : through a mercy purchased for us, by His humiliation ; who, first, made us ; and, then, made Himself a curse for us, that He might save us from the curse.

But, if his position was offensive, how much more his prayer! "God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are; extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." Except the opening clause, who would have dreamed that this was meant to be a prayer? And, yet, it was the Pharisee's. "The Pharisee stood, and prayed thus with himself." So subtle is the heart of man; and such a traitor to itself. So certain it is, that, as the heart is, so will be its issues. Self-dependence, first, then, self-justification, and, at last, self-exaltation, had eaten out humility and penitence and charity. He thanked God, it is true; or said, he did: but altogether in the lordly way, of one that does a favour, or that pays a compliment. The race of men, in his esteem, were in two classes; and he, the whole of one. The rest, no word too harsh, for their description; "extortioners, unjust, adulterers," one and all: until contempt has found its climax in "this Publican." In his heart, no doubt, he added, "whom I despise." And then, the ground of all this self-complacency. "I fast twice in the week:" the Law appointed but one day, in all the year; the great day of atonement. "I give tithes of all that I possess;" the Law required no tithe, but of the fruits of the earth and the increase of cattle. He thus exceeded the requirements of the Law. Did he not bring the Lord in debt? Might he not boast a little of his virtue? Not, that it was not well to fast. Not, that his over-tithing of his substance was not well. Self-denial is the medicine of the

soul: and, when it turns to alms, it is “twice blessed; in him that gives, and him that takes.” But, here, by a strange alchemy of evil, the fasting, which was ordained to teach humility, the tribute of the tenth, which was to teach dependence upon God, were turned the other way; and made to minister to pride. In a diseased stomach, honey becomes bitterness. And it is so, with an evil nature. It turns the holiest things to evil. As, even prayer, with the proud Pharisee, became vainglorious boasting. “God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are; extortioners, unjust, or even as this Publican!” And now, perhaps, you say, How strange a prayer! Could any one presume to offer such a prayer to God? Could any one, who knew himself, conceive it in his heart? How great a privilege it is to be a Christian! God, I thank Thee—it is but carrying out the thought—God, I thank Thee—that I am not as this Pharisee! So easy is it to slip into the very fault, which we condemn! So apt, at self-deception, is the heart of man! So subtle its disguises, and so treacherous its turns. You, doubtless, never *did* say such a prayer. But have you never prayed without a sense of your entire dependence upon God, for every thing, in time and in eternity? Have you never prayed, without the true, heartfelt conviction of your sinfulness and wretchedness? Has there never mingled in your prayers, the very slightest feeling of self-satisfaction? Have you not sometimes thought, there might be merit in your prayers? My brethren, as the man is, so the prayer will be. You cannot come here with high no-

tions of yourselves, your station in society, your influence with men, your property, your talents, your attainments, your attractiveness of person : and, then, kneel down, and pray an humble prayer. You cannot come here, with contemptuous estimates of other men, their rank, their circumstances, their qualities ; you cannot come here, with censorious and uncharitable thoughts ; you cannot come here, with a heart that never feels for other's woes, a hand that never opens to relieve them : you cannot come here, with a habit of indifference to human wants, and human sufferings, and human ignorance, and human sinfulness ; and, then, kneel down, and pray the prayer of love. You cannot come here, with the thought of value, in what you have done, or are, the feeling of dependence upon alms or duties, upon prayers or sacraments, as, in themselves, of meritorious acceptance before God : you cannot come here, without utter self-prostration, and self-crucifixion : and then pray a penitential prayer. Prayer is the breathing of the soul. It must be, therefore, *as* the soul. And, not to know your helplessness, and not to feel and to bewail your sinfulness, is not to pray the only prayer which God regards, the prayer of contrite hearts : in one word—phrase it, as you may ; though it should be the very Saviour's prayer—is but to pray, with the proud Pharisee ; and mock God with a show of thanks, which are but self-esteem, and a pretence of prayer, which is but boasting and vainglory. In short, and to be plain, is to be, and do, just that, at which this parable was aimed, by Him ; who spake it, as St. Luke informs us,

“unto certain which trusted, in themselves, that they were righteous, and despised others.”

And, now, observe the contrast. “And the Publican, standing afar off, would not lift up, so much as his eyes, unto heaven : but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner ! ” He stood afar off. He ventured not too near the Holy place. He felt how fit that was, for *him*, which, once was said to Moses, “draw not nigh hither ; put off thy shoes from off thy feet : for the place on which thou standest is holy ground.” He would not lift up, so much as his eyes, to heaven. As “Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.” And as Ezra, “O my God, I am ashamed, and blush, to lift up my face, to Thee, my God, for our iniquities, are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.” He “smote upon his breast ;” to crush, if so, he might, the hidden sin that cursed his nature, while it plagued his heart : as they that saw the crucifixion, when they felt themselves partakers of its guilt, “beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.” And all, he said, was this, and said it, doubtless, with an all but desperate reiteration, as one that asks, a well-nigh, hopeless, thing, “God be merciful, God be merciful, God be merciful, to me, a sinner.” The fewest words that could be used, and, yet, the fittest. And, fitter, far, than any one can know, who does not take the full sense of the words, in the original, in their connection with the circumstances of the place and time. The word, which is translated here, “be merciful” is

not the word, which would be used, if nothing more were meant. It does not signify mere reconciliation, but reconciliation, effected through some gift, or sacrifice, or offering. In this sense, heathen writers use it. In this sense, it was familiar to the Jews. Only a Christian could perceive and realize the fulness of this sense. The force of it is such, says one, that it expressly indicates, as the primary cause of reconciliation, the blood and death of Jesus Christ. "The exact version of the words, of the whole prayer, in the original," says Mr. Greswell, "is this; 'God be propitiated to me, the sinner:'" and, so, it not only declares the Publican's own sense of his sinfulness, as pre-eminently "*the sinner*;" and intercedes for forgiveness: but it also expresses his confidence and assurance of obtaining it; because sought for, in that way which God Himself had appointed. It declares, therefore, not only the depth of his contrition, and the sincerity of his repentance, but the liveliness of his faith and the vigour of his hope. It shows him to have had a right apprehension of the nature and intent of sacrifice, as the appointed means of reconciling the sinner to God; and a firm reliance on its efficacy, when applied to the justification of the sinner, through the mercy of God, *as the efficient cause*; but, through an act of His appointment, *as the instrumental means*. And, now, observe the fitness of the time and place, to carry out this thought. It was the Temple. It was the hour of prayer. The blood was streaming, from the daily sacrifice. The cloud of incense filled the holy place, with fragrance.

The priest stood, as it were “between the living and the dead,” to stay the plague. It was the appointed symbol of the great atonement. To the believing Jew, it made the great atonement, actual. That blood was, as the blood of the redeeming Lamb. That incense was, as the acceptable supplication of the great Intercessor, for all sinners. He poured the prayer, from a full heart. *God be propitiated to me, the sinner!* And He whose bleeding death was represented, by that stained and streaming altar, made acceptance for his prayer; and poured his pardon from on high. “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other;” by which our Saviour means to say, *this man and not the other*. “The prayer of the Publican,” says Mr. Greswell, “like the sacrifice of Abel, being offered in the humility of self-distrust, in the merit of an atoning righteousness, in the sense of entire dependence upon God, might be acceptable, for the same reason, that Abel’s was; while the worship of the Pharisee, in the spirit of pride, and unbelief, in the confidence of his own strength, in the self-sufficiency of its own merits, with no consciousness of any thing required, with no acknowledgment of any thing to be received of grace, resembling, so, the sacrifice of Cain, might be as offensive as his was; and, for the same cause.” In Cyprian’s beautiful words, “let a worshipper, dearest brethren, be not ignorant, how the Publican prayed, with the Pharisee, in the Temple; not with the presumption to lift up his eyes to heaven, nor having confidence to upraise his hands; but striking upon his breast, and giv-

ing testimony of the sins, inclosed within, he implored help, from the divine mercy : and while the Pharisee was satisfied, with himself, this man, thus asking, obtained rather to be sanctified ; who placed the hope of salvation, not in a reliance on his own innocence, (for no man is innocent,) but humbly prayed, with a confession of his sins ; and, praying, was heard of Him, who pardons the humble." "He spake this parable," says the Evangelist, "unto certain, which trusted in themselves, that they were righteous, and despised others." He showed what that meant, which He had said before, "For, every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." In the expressive phrase of the exulting and adoring Virgin, the blessed Mother of the Saviour of us all, "He filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He sent, empty away."

There is a twofold lesson, in the parable, for the two classes, into which it divides us all : for one, a warning ; for the other an encouragement. For, of all of us, there are but these two classes : the careless souls, who do not know their sin, and so, their danger ; and the "humble men of heart," who feel and own their guilt, and yearn to be delivered from its curse. Dear brethren, how can there be more than these ? If God be perfect, in His holiness, and we, all sinners, in His sight, and sin, the wages, by which men earn eternal death, then every soul of man, that knows and owns that this is so, must either be persuaded, that he has forgiveness and acceptance, in himself ; or, else, must

seek and plead for it, through merit, not his own. It does not need that he stand up and say, God, I demand acceptance. It does not need, that he recount his virtues, or contrast himself with others, whom he thinks inferior to himself. It does not need, that he adopt this theory, or that, of God's forbearance, for the sinner; or, of the merit of his works. If he be satisfied with his condition, before God; if he be one, that is "at ease in his possessions;" if he care not, like Gallio, for any of these things: if he content himself with time; if he content himself with self; in one plain word, if his first seeking be not God's kingdom, and its righteousness, he has no part in it; and has condemned himself. For, to a sinner, indifference should be impossible. He must be God's, or not. And if not God's, then, lost. As Joshua warned the Israelites, that there were but two, that they could serve: the Lord or Baal. And as the gracious Saviour bade that young man, who had kept the law, from his youth up, if he would be perfect, go, and sell what he had, and give to the poor, and come and follow Him; and he should have treasure, in heaven. Ah, my beloved! It is here that *your* delusion lies, who are content with your condition; and, here too, your destination! You are too rich, to give all up. Earth satisfies you, too well, to seek for treasure, in heaven. You are too much occupied, with the world, to follow Him who crucifies it. You are contented, not to be quite perfect. But is it so, that you would deal with earthly things? Is not perfection, still, the aim in every science, and in all the arts? Are men content

with the steam-engine, yet : or the magnetic telegraph ? Does Raphael bound the painter's aspirations ? or the sculptor's, Canova, or Thorwaldsen ? When you set out a tree, are you contented, if it bear but some fruit, or of indifferent excellence ? And is it otherwise, do you suppose, with God ; who is the sole perfection ? Shall He be counted on, to take us, as we will not take each other ? Is it written, in vain, Be ye perfect, even as your Father, who is in heaven is perfect ? Is it written, in vain, of that young man, He went away sorrowful ; for he was very rich ? Beloved brethren, you may be Pharisees, without your knowing it. You are so, if you trust, in yourselves, that you are righteous. You are so, if you hope to come to God, without a broken and a contrite heart. You are so, if you trust in any thing, but in the Cross of Jesus Christ. " Judge yourselves, that ye be not judged of the Lord."

And, as there is a solemn warning in the parable, so there is the tenderest encouragement. It is the Saviour's gracious confirmation of those most comfortable words, " Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest ! " It is the Saviour's gracious illustration of that benign and blessed text ; " I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." The soul, that feels its sinfulness ; the soul, that groans beneath its load of guilt ; the soul, that shrinks, and shudders, at the thought of Judgment ; the soul, that casts itself, in prostrate penitence, before the Cross ; and clings to the dear feet of Him, who hangs upon it for its sins, as its sole merit,

sole dependence, and sole hope,—God, for Jesus Christ's sake, be propitiated to me, a sinner!—of him, it has been written, and the record will still brighten, through eternal ages, in the light, that shines from out the face of Jesus Christ, “him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out!”—“him that” only “cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” Gracious, blessed Saviour, we come, we come to Thee, in Thine own sacrament to-day. Accept us mercifully, and bless us graciously.

SERMON XLV.

PARENTAL DUTY.

EPHESIANS VI. 4.—Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

WHEN Confirmation is announced, in any parish, there are three classes of persons, who are chiefly interested: the parents of children, who have, not, yet, been brought to the Bishop; the children themselves; and all others, who have not been confirmed. I propose to consider the three, in the three discourses, which, if it please God, will precede its next administration. And, first, of the duty of parents, in regard to Confirmation.

It is a favourite trick of Satan, to separate religion from our ordinary life. If he can bring men to regard it, only, as a thing for Sundays, he has reduced it to one-seventh. It cannot be so little; and, not soon, be less. There are people who seem to shut up their religion with their Prayer Book. Like their best clothes, they wear it, but on great occasions. Or think of it, as some do of the making of their wills; as the last thing before the undertaker. It was beautifully said of Socrates, that he brought down

philosophy, from the clouds, to dwell with men. It is as much more beautiful, as it is more true, to say, that Jesus Christ became incarnate; not only to be the sacrifice and substitute for sinners; but to make religion daily and domestic. Not till the souls of men live separate from their bodies, can that, which is the soul's life, be separated from their daily cares, their daily thoughts, their daily duties, and their daily pleasures.

“ We need not bid, for cloistered cell,
Our neighbour and our work farewell,
Nor strive to wind ourselves too high
For sinful men beneath the sky :
The trivial round, the common task,
Would furnish all we ought to ask ;
Room to deny ourselves ; a road
To bring us, daily, nearer God.”

I shall confine the application of the caution thus suggested, to the parental obligation. There can be no parent, who does not desire to have good children. The question is, about the means, which they employ. The Apostle, with characteristic keenness, meets the case: “ Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

The worldly ways which parents use, to make their children good, are various. Appeals to their appetite. Appeals to their selfishness. Appeals to their pride. Restraints of their freedom. The mortification of their vanity. Some coax. Some flatter. And some bribe. Others, again, rely on scolding and the rod. That both

these last resorts are scriptural, will need no texts, to prove. That both do worse than fail: sometimes, from the spirit; sometimes from the manner of their application; experience, sadly, shows. To whip a child, in anger; to subject him to mere gusts of passion; to wreak on him the self-inflictions of an evil temper; to be forever strict, in marking what he does amiss, indiscriminate, in its exposure, and sharp, in its reproof: this is what the Apostle cautions *you* against, my brethren, who are parents; when he warns you not to “provoke” your children “to wrath:” adding, in another place, in words of exquisite humanity, “lest they be discouraged.”

Nor, does he find fault, with one course, and not suggest another. “Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” However you may use the just restraints of admonition or of punishment, in the correction of your children, beware of their excess: and, least of all, rely, on them, as in themselves sufficient. Your only true reliance is “the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Religious training, and religious discipline, alone, will make you certain of good children.

I. The word, translated “nurture,” in the text, includes the whole training of a child. As limited, in the expression, “the nurture of the Lord,” it means his whole religious training.

i. It includes baptism. This is the very first paren-

tal duty. What would be thought of any mother, who should provide no nurture, for her babe. The law presumes intention of infanticide, whenever a child is born, without the necessary preparation for its clothing and its comfort. But, baptism is for spiritual life: God's way to make a child of wrath a child of grace; to wash it from its native sins; to graft it, into Christ, that it may live in Him; to introduce it, by adoption, to the family of God; to secure for it, as His child, a portion, in His kingdom. Need any thing be added to those benign and blessed words of Jesus Christ: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for, of such is the kingdom of God."

ii. The nurture of the Lord includes catechizing. I employ this, as the most comprehensive term, for all the offices of a religious education. How comprehensive it is, you will see, when I tell you that in that familiar proverb, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and, when he is old, he will not depart from it," the original, as you will find it, in the margin of your Bibles, is, "Catechize a child." It is well-nigh an instinct, with all parents, to have their children taught. At least, those elements of learning which are required for daily life. Now, there is a daily life of the soul. And, in the Catechism, are contained those elements of Christian training, which it needs for its direction. This elementary training, the Church provides for all her children, "without money and without price." Whatever men may say or do, about free schools, the Church of Jesus Christ is a free school for all the

world. "The minister of every parish shall diligently, upon Sundays, and Holy days, or on some other convenient occasions, openly in the Church, instruct, or examine so many children of his parish, sent unto him, as he shall think convenient, in some part of the Catechism." Wisely and faithfully, as well as happily, the Mother of our new birth, more careful, even, than parents, for their children, says positively and peremptorily, "all Fathers, Mothers, Masters and Mistresses, shall cause their children, servants, and apprentices who have not learned their Catechism, to come to the Church, at the time appointed, and obediently to hear, and to be ordered by the Minister, until such time as they have learned all that is here appointed for them to learn." A rule, not left to the mere Rubric, to enforce itself; but urged, with all the eloquence of earnestness, upon the hearts of parents and of sponsors, at that impressive moment, when the dews of baptism sparkle still, upon the fair and fragrant flower: "forasmuch as this child has promised by you his sureties, to renounce the Devil and all his works, to believe in God, and to serve Him, ye must remember that it is your parts and duties to see, that this infant be taught, so soon as he shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise and profession, he hath here made by you. And, that, he may know these things the better, ye shall call upon him to hear sermons: and chiefly ye shall provide, that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and all other things, which a Christian ought to know and believe, to

his soul's health." And this religious teaching, day by day, on Mother's knee, by Father's side, at Pastor's feet, is to be kept up constantly, until the time, when he can take the vows of baptism on himself: nor cease, at all, until he has been brought unto the Bishop, for "the laying on of hands."

It hardly need be added, that the nurture of the Lord includes, besides the direct instruction of the Catechism, in its comprehensive sense, the indirect and incidental influences, which cluster round the hearth of home. You must habituate your children, if you would have them good, to the good word of God; read in their ears, at morning and at night, and made familiar to their hearts, as "household words." You must accustom them, from infancy, to the prevailing piety of prayer: around the fireside, which it consecrates: and, at the bedside, which it blesses. And you need chiefly, and without it, you must miserably fail, to ask continually of God, the blessing of His grace, to sanctify your children, from the womb; and to enable you to walk among them and before them, by word and deed and good example, as marks and models for their lives.

II. And now as years advance, and nature more develops in your children, religious discipline must come in aid of your religious teaching. To the "nurture," you must add "the admonition of the Lord." The literal meaning of the Greek word is "*putting in mind.*" The happiest word, you see, that could be chosen. Your children have been made God's children, in their

baptism. They have been trained up, as God's children, through their infancy and childhood. They have been taught, with carefulness and diligence, the things which they should know. But, now, as they approach the dangerous verge of youth ; while nature swells within, and the world without attracts, and both conspire to cheat their hearts from God, you must, with all the plainness and with all the patience of affection, put them in mind of what they have been taught : as it is happily expressed, in the exhortation to the God-fathers and Godmothers, at the close of the Baptismal service for adults : "ye must remember that it is your parts and duty to *put them in mind* what a solemn vow, promise and profession, they have now made before this congregation, and especially before you, their chosen witnesses.

III. And now observe the wise provision of the Church. The harvest of the hearth, in Christian sons and daughters, is ripening yearly, like the harvest of the field. Before you think of it, the little one, who came, almost as yesterday, in Mother's arms, to the baptismal font, needs to be put in mind of what you did and promised there. And every year, one and another of your lovelings is whitening, with the wheat, for the celestial granary. Once in a year the Bishop signifies his purpose to confirm in every parish. Once in a year, the faithful Parish Priest, as he gives notice of the Bishop's coming, renews his invitation to the parents to bring their children to him in the laying on of

hands; and puts them in mind, by plainest pastoral counsels, of their duty and their privilege, to seek this blessing for their darlings. According to the Rubric of the Catechism, "So soon as children are come to a competent age, and can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and can answer to the other questions of this short Catechism, they shall be brought to the Bishop." And, according to the Baptismal exhortation, "ye are to take care that this child be brought to the Bishop, to be confirmed by him, so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and is sufficiently instructed in the other parts of the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose."

You have thus before you, my beloved, your duty and your privilege, as parents. You are to add, to the nurture, the admonition of the Lord. Of what you promised for your children in their baptism, and taught them, when their lisping lips could scarcely say "Our Father," you are to put them in mind, as they grow older; at home, by faithful counsels and by fervent prayers; and in the Church, more publicly and solemnly, by bringing them to Confirmation. I say, *by bringing them*; and not by waiting, till they ask to go, themselves. St. Paul, you see, requires that parents bring their children up, not leave them to bring up themselves. He does not recognize that modern theory, which leaves young children to their own wild will; and asks them what their pleasure is, for doctrine and for discipline. But acts upon those words which God

applied to Abraham: "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." The lesson which St. Paul thus, learned, from God, the Church takes up, from him. Of the infant of a week, she says, "Ye have brought this child here to be baptized." Of the little children she requires all fathers and all mothers to cause them to come to the Church; and obediently to hear and to be ordered by the Minister. Of these same children, she says, "they shall be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him." Dearly beloved, upon what authority, do you attempt a difference, in the respective acts of your parental duty, which the Church does not teach; of which the Apostle did not know; which God has nowhere authorized?

Dearly beloved, in your secular affairs, you seek the counsels of the aged and the wise. Upon the Church, the hoar of eighteen centuries has gathered; and she learned her wisdom, at the lips of the incarnate God. She took your children in their new-born helplessness; and made them babes of grace, and heirs of immortality. She received them, when they came with tottering feet and stammering tongues; and taught them in the words and ways of truth and righteousness. And she asks you, now, to trust them to her, again; that the good work, which was begun in baptism, may be completed, in their confirmation; and the gift of the Holy Ghost, added to the remission of their sins. Surely, from such a gift, you will not keep them back. Your hearts

must daily tell you, of their desperate need of its divine and holy graces. And to what, will you commit their helplessness and inexperience, if not to that? You did not hesitate to bring them to the Font, because you did not see how they could, there, be born again. Why, be more curious and distrustful, when the grace to carry on the new birth, in the new and spiritual life, is offered, in "the laying on of hands?" You did not doubt the power of God, to overcome their birth-sin, by "the washing of regeneration." Why then distrust it, to subdue the sinfulness, which years may have developed in them, "by the renewing of the Holy Ghost?" If you have been faithful to them, in "the nurture of the Lord," their baptism and their teaching, as His children, you need not fear to bring them, now, unto His holy "admonition." And, if your anxious hearts reproach you, for unfaithfulness; and sink within you, at the thought of your unworthiness of such a trust for God, it is but as that trembling father felt, when, at the feet of Jesus, he exclaimed with tears, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief!" Come, with your children, so; and you shall not vainly come. The God who hears the prayer will hear and answer yours. He will forgive you for the past. He will accept you in the present. He will bless you through the future. Think, how that gracious One was "much displeased" with those who kept the little children from His touch: and open all the father's, all the mother's heart, to His own wise and winning words, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of

such is the kingdom of heaven." Come to the rescue, now, as brave old Joshua did, against the world, the devil, and the flesh ; "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord ;" and, at the Resurrection, it shall be yours, to rise, and say, through the prevailing love of Him, who died for you and rose again ; "Behold, I and the children, which God hath given me !"

Blessed Saviour, who would have the little children come to Thee, make us all little children, to do all Thy will.

SERMON XLVI.

FILIAL OBEDIENCE.

COLOSSIANS III. 20.—Children, obey your parents, in all things : for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

ON Sunday morning last, I announced, to the very respectable committee, who attended here, on behalf of this congregation, my purpose, to consider the case of three classes of persons ; as especially interested in the approaching confirmation : the parents of children, who have not yet been brought to the Bishop ; the children, themselves ; and all others, who have not been confirmed. The duty of parents, in regard to confirmation, having been considered, then, I proceed, now, to the consideration of the duty of their children.

The text is comprehensive, as you see, beyond the use for which I now especially adduce it. It lays down the whole duty of children to their parents ; including, of course, their duty, to be confirmed. “ Children, obey your parents in all things ; for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.” We have here stated,

- I. The duty of filial obedience, *Children, obey your parents ;*
- II. Its unlimited extent : *in all things ;*
- III. The reason for it : *It is well pleasing unto the Lord.*

I. The duty of filial obedience is fundamental. Society is built upon it. In its neglect our nature becomes monstrous. The precept of the text is universal. It is explicit. It is peremptory. And such the duty is. It is universal. It is the law of human life. It has no limit within the reach of nature. It can only cease when the law of nature ceases, by which the race is reproduced. There are no parents, to whom it is not due. There are no children, on whom it does not lie. It is not enjoined on children, as being dependent on their parents. Nor yet ordained for parents as being older, wiser, stronger, better than their children. It is the law of all children, as children, to all parents, as parents. There is danger in an age, like this, of great freedom of thought and action; and in a country like this, where independence comes to all who seek it, soon and easily, that the filial duty of obedience should lose, in obligation and extent. And it is no imaginary danger. Children *do* get on too fast. They are men and women, when, in other times, and, in the older countries of the world, they would be only boys and girls. It were curious to contemplate the influence of such a state of things, upon the structure of society. And one might find, perhaps, a just and an alarming analogy, in the history of some of our national ships; which, constructed of unseasoned timber, have been worn out in less than a dozen years. But it suffices for our present purpose, to assert the universal duty of filial obedience: and to enforce it by the example of Him, of whom it is said in one place, "In the beginning was the Word, and the

Word was with God, and the Word was God ; and the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." And, in another place, " He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." Again, the duty is explicit. There can be no word more explicit than obey. It is the entire submission of the will. As much so, as in that expressive and familiar figure, " the ship obeys the helm." And it is peremptory ; and so admits of no debate. " Children, obey your parents." " Not answering again," as St. Paul instructed Titus to enjoin on servants : that practice, it is probable, having not yet found a place, as it has now, so sadly, among children.

II. It is a duty of unlimited extent : " Children, obey your parents in all things." Nothing is plainer than that God holds parents accountable for the character and conduct of their children. We see it in the case of Abraham : " I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him ; and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." We find it in the terms of that express and unconditional Proverb : " Train up a child in the way he should go ; and, when he is old, he will not depart from it." We hear it from the mouth of the Apostle : " Ye parents, provoke not your children to wrath ; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." An accountability so great must be met by a corresponding authority. If parents are answerable for their children, children must be obedient to their parents. If there be no limit to parental responsibility, there can be none to

filial obligation. "Children, obey your parents in all things." If not in all things, then, in what? Who is to judge of the exceptions? If the parent, then the law is universal still. If the children, then there is an end of all obedience.

There is a class of duties which, it is claimed, are not within the law of filial obedience. The sanctity of conscience is pleaded, in limitation; and the exclusiveness of individual responsibility, in all religious things, to God. Our blessed Lord, indeed, said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not;" and rebuked those who would have kept them from Him. The Apostle exhorted the Ephesian Christians to "bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." And it is the unequivocal requirement of the Church, as we more fully saw last Sunday, that children shall be brought to baptism, shall be brought to the catechizing, and shall be brought to be confirmed. And, yet, in many cases, children are suffered to reach the competent age, and, though able to say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and to answer the other questions in the short Catechism, yet, come not, though their parents wish it, to the Bishop, to be confirmed by him. It is an act of filial disobedience. It is most positively forbidden by the injunction of the text, "Children, obey your parents in all things." It is an aggravated case of disobedience. For the very condition, on which they were received, in Holy Baptism, was the understanding, that, at the point of time, described above, they should come and be confirmed. And,

to refuse, or to delay, is to bring upon their parents the alarming responsibility, of failing to perform their most express engagements, made, at a time, and under circumstances, of the most overwhelming solemnity. And for the plea of conscience! And of individual responsibility, in sacred things, to God! Will it not lie as well against the parental exhortation to read the Bible? Against the parental influence of family prayers? Against the parental requirement to attend the public worship of the Church? Shall a child plead conscience, not to say the Creed, or the Lord's Prayer, or the Ten Commandments? Shall a child set up the claim of individual responsibility to God, in refusing to be catechized? Or to keep holy the sacred day? Or to kneel at prayers? It is a claim which goes too far; an argument which proves too much. It is allowing children to judge, where they have simply to obey. It is true that they are called upon to renew their vows of baptism, and to own that they are bound by them. But is not this a fact, whether they acknowledge it or not? Are not those solemn vows upon their souls? Can they refuse to ratify, and not reject them? Can they deny that they are bound by them? And for the rest, the kneeling in the prayers, the bowing of the head beneath the Bishop's hands, his parting benediction: can they refuse this much, at the parental instance, under the strongest solemnity of the parental obligation, and not as well refuse all Christian acts, and repudiate all Christian influences? Was not the asking for the gracious gift of the divine and Holy Spirit, and kneeling to receive

it, the essence and the end of every act of prayer and office of religion? And is there more, or other ground, for the refusal to comply with that becoming ordinance, which, on the day of Pentecost, was authorized and consecrated by the very presence of the Comforter; and has from that time, kept its place in all the churches of the Saints? Which the Apostle Paul expressly sets, in his enumeration of first principles, next after repentance, faith and baptism; and which the Church requires of all, in act or will, who would receive that Holy Communion: of which the only Saviour said, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you! Can children safely disobey their parents, in this solemn matter? Can they do so, and not sin? Can they do so, and not sin against the Holy Ghost?

III. Consider, finally, in this connection, the reason which the Apostle gives for his injunction: "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." The duty of obedience is not required of children, because it is for their own happiness. Nor, yet, on the instinctive claim, which nature prompts, even in her lower tribes. But on the ground of the divine approval. If it be so in all the lower ranges of devotion and of duty; in all the things where children can obey their parents; how much more so in the highest! If in regard to things, which perish in the using, filial obedience is well pleasing to the Lord, how much more pleasing, in the ministries of grace, and in the ser-

vice which concerns the soul, and makes for immortality. Even in the holy Child of Nazareth, at eight days made obedient to the law, at forty days presented in the Temple, what so delightful in the sight of God or man, as the affecting picture of His childhood, which, at twelve years old, presents Him in the Temple with the Doctors; lingering too long, indeed, for the anxieties of human love; but taken there, as was the custom of the Jews, by His devout and faithful parents, to be enrolled among the faithful, as is ordained for Christian children, now, in Confirmation! Well pleasing in the sight of God, the early offering at His Shrine, in the meek dedication, at the Font, of infant helplessness and frailty. Still more, the lisping voices of the children in the Temple, as their answers in the Catechism prolong the echo of that youthful throng, which, in the days of His incarnate Godhead, cried, "Hosanna, to the Son of David!" But most of all, the modest maiden or the ardent boy, led by the hands of parents and of sponsors, to the chancel rail, to claim anew the consecration of the cross traced in baptismal water on the brow of infancy, and ask its cleansing for the past, and its salvation for the eternal future.

Beloved children, to gather such as you are, in the peaceful fold of Jesus Christ, and feed them there, has been for thirty years the crowning labour of my love and life. And if sincerity and earnestness in any service find proof in scars and wounds, there can be little doubt of mine. I come before you once again, to draw you, if I may, in the dear name of Jesus Christ, and with the

pastoral crook, with which He set me here to feed His lambs, to come and own Him for your Saviour, who so lovingly has bought you with His blood. I do not now appeal to you with this beseeching plea, through feeling, or through fancy, as you might match a ribbon, or select a playmate for a day. But I address you on the ground of filial duty, and I challenge your obedience, as well pleasing to the Lord. You have Christian mothers, Christian fathers, Christian sponsors. They brought you in your infancy, to Jesus Christ, and had you sealed and signed as His, with His own blood. The Christian Pastor, who there traced the cross upon your brow, or one who represents him to your hearts, unites with them, in the discharge of their most bounden duty, at the Font most solemnly accepted and declared, to bring you, now that you have reached the fitting age, and have been faithfully instructed, to receive the laying on of Apostolic hands. The Bishop, in the name of Jesus Christ, waits to receive you and to bless you : and the whole Church throughout the world, and through the ages all along, echoes and urges to your hearts, the exhortation of the Scriptures, "Children, obey your parents in all things : for this is well pleasing to the Lord." Beloved children, is it human, is it filial, is it childlike, to resist ? Think what the Lord, whom your obedience is to please, has done for you. Your life proceeds from Him. He has endowed you with the gifts of reason, and the graces of the heart. He has opened in your bosoms the well-spring of human love, to green and gladden all the mazes of your life. He has strung every nerve

with health, and made your senses, all, the avenues of joy. He opens at your will the stores of intellectual wealth. He knits your hearts in, with the love of father, mother, brother, sister, friend. He tells you of Himself. He spreads His holy word before you. He extends to you the sheltering shadow of His Church. When you were shut out from Heaven, as sinners, He opened it before you, with that Roman spear, which pierced the heart of His dear, only Son. And with His blood-stained cross, He made a way for your redeemed feet, that you might enter there, and be with Him. And it is His voice that you refuse to hear. And that which is well pleasing unto Him, that you refuse to do. Beloved children, there was once a time, when the dear Saviour stood with His disciples, by the Sea of Galilee, as now He stands with you. He had miraculously fed their hunger, with a little basketful of bread and two poor fishes : and He had stilled the storm for them, upon the chafed Gennesaret, and brought them safe to shore. Yet when He taught them, as to-day He has by me, the plain requirements of His Gospel, and besought them, as by my voice now, to come to Him, if they would live, and feed upon His flesh and drink His blood, they took offence at what He said, as some of you, at me ; called it a hard saying, which they would not hear, as some of you perhaps, my exhortation ; and went back, as one and another, it may be, of you, will do, and walked no more with Him. The Lamb of God was of a loving heart. And loving hearts feel keenly, when their love is disregarded. And so He turned to the im-

mediate twelve whom He had garnered closest in His bosom, as for Him, and in His name, I turn to you, and said—Can you not hear the melting accents of His melancholy words?—"Will ye also go away?" Beloved children, "Will ye also go away?" Come to Him, rather, now, as Simon Peter did, with all the fulness of your free and fervent hearts, as dear, obedient children. Lord, to whom shall we go?

SERMON XLVII.

THE UNCONFIRMED.

ACTS VIII. 16.—For, as yet, He was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized, in the name of the Lord Jesus.

THE formal statement of a proposition is not always the most forcible. An indirect insinuation; an incidental intimation; as, in the text, a mere parenthesis, in passing, will often fall, with a far greater power. As the small shell, that drops, one sees not how, into the magazine, will do the work of twenty broadsides; and will do it better.

I wish you all had Bibles, reference Bibles; and would bring them here. I have heard, that, in another country, among a people, as cautious in the reception of authority, as they are in the disbursement of money, it is a custom universal. And, that the turning of the leaves, as they pursue the preacher, text by text, sounds, in the stillness of the house of prayer, like the low rustling of the south-west wind, as with its violet breath, it whispers to the pine trees, of the love of God; and they reply, in whispers, God is love. It is a wise and wholesome practice; and would make the preaching of the

word a far more real and more profitable thing. As the Bereans, as St. Luke has told us, and calls them noble for their course, received the word, indeed, from the Apostle's mouth, with all readiness of mind; but searched the Scriptures, daily, whether these things were so.

The approaching confirmation, as you know beforehand, is still the theme of my discourse. I have shown you, as I could, the duty of parents on this subject; and the duty of their children. I am to consider, now, the case of all others, who have not received the laying on of hands. I have chosen for my text, as a mere glance at the sacred page will show, a parenthetical sentence, from the inspired account of the first confirmation, which is recorded: because I am persuaded that it covers, more completely, than any other words of Scripture, the whole case of those, with whom, this morning, I have specially to do: and more effectually disposes of it, by its necessary implication, than any simple and direct assertion could. While the reference, in the margin, to four other places of the book, in which the acts of the Apostles are recorded, closes the argument as conclusively and irresistibly as could be done by mathematic demonstration.

The Lamb of God had suffered at the Passover, to take away our sins. Upon the following Pentecost, He had sent down the Holy Ghost, to sanctify our souls. The wondrous signs of that most wondrous day arrested the attention of the multitude, that filled Jerusalem. And the plain preaching of the Gospel of the Crucified,

by Peter's fervent mouth, pricked their compunctious hearts. In answer, to their anxious cry, for pardon and for help, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"—he said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Three thousand of them did. They did repent. They did profess the name and faith of Jesus Christ. They were baptized. That they received, beside, the promised gift of the divine and Holy Spirit, though not expressly stated, is unquestionable. Since they did that which human nature cannot do, but through His grace: gave themselves up in unreserving self-devotion and self-sacrifice, to God; and "continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship"—they who before had persecuted them, and crucified their Lord—"and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Time rolls away. New persecutions of the faithful in Christ Jesus have arisen. Saul, like a tiger from his first hot taste of blood, is making "havoc of the church." They fly, like scattered sheep. Not faithlessly, or fearfully; but, as their Master had instructed them, that they might bear His Gospel, so, to those who would receive it; and the very wrath of man be made to praise Him in the spread of His life-giving word. Among the rest, a Deacon, by the name of Philip, went to the city of Samaria, and there preached Christ; as the Apostle Peter, first, upon the Pentecost, and at Jerusalem. In the merciful compassion of the Gospel, Jews and Samaritans are brought together, in the one, Christ

Jesus : and they, who had no dealings with each other, nor any common feeling, but their mutual hatred, stand, side by side, and heart in heart, within the Church. For “when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” The record of the doings of the day of Pentecost, and the record of the doings in the city of Samaria, are thus a perfect parallel : and both the lines are terminated at the Font. As He had said to Nicodemus, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Results, indeed, are stated, in the former record, which indicate the presence and the power of that, which Peter promised ; “the gift of the Holy Ghost.” But, that it was bestowed, the record does not say. Take up again, the second record, for a moment, and see how clear a light it shall throw back, upon the first. “Now, when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John,” themselves you know Apostles ; “who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. (For,” continues the Evangelist, in that most pregnant parenthesis which I have chosen for my text—every word of which is weighty, and the whole together overwhelming—for, “as yet, He was fallen upon none of them ; only, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them ; and they received the Holy Ghost.”

Be patient with me, for a moment, while we scrutinize the passage, word by word. The report that a multitude of men and women in Samaria had believed and been baptized, reached the Apostles in Jerusalem. It must have filled their hearts with joy. It must have poured them out in praise. But was this all? Surely, if, *thus*, the gracious Gospel plan had been completed, it might have been so. But mark the record. "Now, when the Apostles, which were in Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had renewed the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John." It was the infancy of the church. It was a period of persecution. Only the Apostles were at Jerusalem. There were but twelve of them. Their hands, their hearts, were, surely, more than full. And, yet, at the instant, they send two of their number; and these we need not hesitate to say, the two most prominent and influential, down to the city of Samaria. With what joy and gladness, must their visit have been welcomed by that rejoicing city! And what a flood of grateful praise must have burst forth from their delighted hearts, who came to witness such a work! Doubtless, it was so. But the record of them is, "Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost." They had repented. They had believed in Jesus Christ. They had been baptized. "There was great joy in that city." And, yet the two Apostles, instead of lifting up their voices, in a glorious "*Te Deum*," for a work accomplished; fall on their knees, and pray for something more: "who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might

receive the Holy Ghost." And then, as if to settle, once for all, the order of God's dealings, when a nation or a city is converted unto Christ, or when an individual sinner, in repenting faith, has been baptized into His name, this strange parenthesis comes in, that explanation may be plainer, and assurance made more sure: "*for*," as if, to defend their act, by enforcing its necessity; "*as yet*," a thing unquestionably in the purpose of the sacred plan, though not, "*as yet*," performed; "*He*" (the Holy Ghost) "*was fallen upon none of them*," as He must, to make the gracious work complete: "*only*," as the indispensable preliminary to His due reception, "*they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus*." If that were all that is recorded, we should indeed be left in painful and perplexing doubt. Though all would then be written which had been of the day of Pentecost. But, that the story of Samaria may be complete, in its connection: and its completeness be the supplement to that, which is recorded of the converts at Jerusalem, it is distinctly added, and made so plain, that he may read who runneth, "then laid they their hands on them," the Apostles Peter and John, on the baptized Samaritans, both men and women, "and they received the Holy Ghost." What that same Peter promised, in his answer to the question, on the day of Pentecost, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"—"Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;" that, the Samaritans did, then, and there, and thus, receive: not, because they had been baptized;

not, because the Apostles had prayed for them, that they might receive it; but because, "they laid their hands upon them."

Here, I might safely end my sermon. If the inevitable conclusion is not reached, in any mind, by the simple force of this historic statement, reasoned out, for us, as to its connection and results, by the Evangelist—must I not rather say, with utmost reverence, by the Holy Ghost, Himself?—no word of mine can help it on. Dangerous indeed would the reliance be, on that impression, which had been yielded to the enticing words of man's wisdom, when it had resisted the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Yet, in brief recapitulation, that you may carry home with you the sacred argument, and, on your knees, beseech the Holy Ghost, who framed it, to complete His gracious work, in you, and fill the hearts, which He has touched, I will in fewest words remind you of the proportions, which the text and context undeniably involve; and leave you, so, to their adoption, by your hearts, and in your lives.

"Now, when the Apostles, which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for, as yet, He was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

Give me your minds, now, for a moment, while I ask, that you may answer, not, to me, but to your con-

science, and to God ; is it not obvious and undeniable from this Scripture :

i. That to them who have repented and believed, and been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, there still is something of an indispensable necessity ; else why did the Apostles Peter and John go from Jerusalem to Samaria ?

ii. That this indispensable something is the gift of the Holy Ghost, promised by St. Peter at Jerusalem to all who should repent and believe and be baptized ; and prayed for, by St. Peter and St. John, when they had reached Samaria :

iii. That this indispensable something, as it is not given in baptism, as the text expressly says, “ for as yet He had fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus ; ” so it is not to be looked for merely as the answer to any prayers, else surely it must have been granted to those of the Apostles, John and Peter ; but

iv. Is to be looked for, and will certainly be found, by them who seek it in the simple-heartedness of little children, in the laying on of Apostolic hands ; “ Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.”

I do not stop, to prove, what the Apostle Paul, in writing to the Hebrews, has settled in a word, that “ the laying on of hands,” is as real and as permanent in the divine plan for the salvation of the sinner, as repentance or faith or baptism, as the resurrection or the Judgment. I do not stop, to prove, what of necessity would follow,

unless we blasphemously think that God could have a plan, and not provide for its accomplishment ; that in the Apostolic line, continued from the day of the Ascension, the hands of Peter and of John are still stretched out, to give, from God, to all who will receive it, that most gracious gift. I do not stop to prove, that, in the ordinance of Confirmation, this gift is *offered* to all who have been baptized, and come to years of discretion ; and *assured* to all who come, with open hearts, for its reception : “ Defend, O Lord, this Thy child with Thy heavenly grace ; that he may continue Thine for ever ; and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more, until he come unto Thy everlasting kingdom ; ” “ Grant, O Lord, that they who at this place shall in their own persons renew the promises and vows which they made, or which were made for them by their sureties, at their baptism, and thereupon shall be confirmed by the Bishop, may receive such a measure of Thy Holy Spirit, that they may be enabled faithfully to fulfil the same and grow in grace unto their lives’ end.” I content myself, beloved, with reminding you, to whom this sermon is especially addressed, that, as baptized believers, you are just in the condition of the men and women of Samaria ; upon whom the Holy Ghost had not yet fallen, only they were baptized. That the answer to the question of your hearts, “ Men and brethren, what shall we do ? ” is not complete, without “ the gift of the Holy Ghost.” That its conveyance is assured to you,—whether you take the Scripture now before you, or its parallel in the nineteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apos-

bles, where St. Paul at Ephesus baptizes twelve, who had been John's disciples, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and then lays his hands on them, and they receive the Holy Ghost—only in the Apostolic ordinance of Confirmation. And I then leave you to your hearts and God, to do your duty in the premises.

Remember, my beloved, if you were baptized in infancy, it was under the express injunction to your Godfathers and Godmothers, "Ye are to take care that this child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and is sufficiently instructed in the other parts of the Church Catechism, set forth for that purpose."

Remember, my beloved, if you were baptized in riper years, it was under the express declaration of the Rubric, "it is expedient that every person thus baptized should be confirmed by the Bishop, so soon after his baptism as conveniently may be; that so he may be admitted to the Holy Communion;" and that this declaration of expediency, in the Rubric of the Order of Confirmation, becomes an injunction of bounden duty; since it declares, "there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or ready and desirous to be confirmed"—that Holy Communion, of which He said, as He stood by the lake-side of Genesaret, in words as solemn as even His holy lips could utter, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you;" that Holy Communion, of which He

said, as He sat, for the last time with His disciples, at the Paschal Board which fifteen hundred years had consecrated, in words as tender as even His loving lips could utter, "Take, eat, this is My Body, which is given for you ; drink ye all of this, for this is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins ; do this as oft as ye shall drink it in remembrance of Me."

And remember, I beseech you, my beloved, though the fountain of the heavenly grace is full and free and open, as the fountains of the rain ; and though the ministry of the Apostles, which the Lord ordained and blesses, reaches from heaven to earth, as, in the prophet's vision, the golden pipes, through which the golden oil was emptied, from the olive branches ; *that* fountain has been opened and *those* pipes been formed in vain, unless your hearts, in the simplicity of love, are open to receive the grace. "Verily, I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God, as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

SERMON XLVIII.

THE FIRST BAPTISM.

ACTS II. 41.—Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

THE first of every thing has, always, a peculiar interest: the first bud, that blooms; the first cluster, that ripens; the first-born child. And, a special value comes, of this peculiar interest; the first earnings, of the young mechanic; the first purchased book, of the young scholar; the first home, of the young wife. And, in things of permanent regard, there will be added, to this special value and peculiar interest, admiration, and reverence, and authority: the first battle of the war for independence; the first action, under the Federal Constitution; the first councils of the Christian Church. “*Stare decisis*,” to abide by the decisions; “*Stare super antiquas vias*,” to stand in the ancient tracks: are proverbs of established, universal, wisdom. Nay, it is express, divine, authority: “Stand, ye, in the ways, and see, and ask, for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk, therein, and ye shall find rest, for your souls; thus, saith the Lord.” I do but act, then, on a

native instinct, confirmed, by heavenly inspiration, when I propose, in three successive sermons, to consider, with you, the circumstances and precedents of the First Baptism, the First Confirmation, and the First Eucharist. That which was first, Tertullian says, is true; the new is, therefore, false. No matter, whether it be the device of Puritan, or Papist; the parity of the Christian ministry, or the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin: that which is new, in religion, is, *therefore*, false. In our dear Lord's calm words, "The old is better."

We are to consider, now, the circumstances and the precedents of the FIRST CHRISTIAN BAPTISM. Its *circumstances*, as they are recorded by St. Luke; and its *precedents*, as they are gathered from his record: what it teaches us, as to our danger, as to our deliverance, and as to our duty.

I. The circumstances of the First Christian Baptism, as they are recorded by St. Luke, are few and simple. So it is, with the Creation. So it is, with the Crucifixion. How much simpler the rising of the sun, which beautifies the world, than the lighting of this Church. Sublimest things are always simplest. Jesus had died, and risen, and ascended into Heaven. The Apostles were to wait, in Jerusalem, till He fulfilled "the promise of the Father." They did. Upon the ancient Feast of Pentecost, it came. It left no doubt, of its divinity. To the Apostles, it conveyed the gift of tongues. To Peter's preaching, it gave power, to prick

three thousand hearts. "Therefore," said he—the Gospel in one sentence—"let all the house of Israel know, assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." "Now when they heard this," St. Luke relates, "they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" It is the question, which an honest man, convinced that he is wrong, will always ask: as Saul on the road to Damascus; "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"—as the Apostles' jailer at Philippi; "Sirs, what shall I do, to be saved?" The answer was express. "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost," "said unto them, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For, the promise is unto you, and to your children, and, to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words, did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation." And, mark the natural result! "Then, they, that gladly received his word, were baptized: and the same day, there were added, unto them, about three thousand souls." Nor, was that the end of it. "And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers."

II. These are the simple circumstances of the First Christian Baptism; simple, but sublime. So many hearts, so deeply touched. St. Peter's summing up of

the whole Gospel, in such fervent words. Their prompt submission. That multitudinous baptism; three thousand, in one day. Their constancy. Their unity. Their charity. Their piety. We are, thus, directly, brought, to the precedents of the First Christian Baptism, as they are recorded, “for our learning;” what they teach us, as to *our danger*, as to *our deliverance*, and as to *our duty*.

i. That Pentecostal multitude, who bowed, in the First Christian Baptism, were, in no way, different, from us. We are men, as they were. We are sinners, as they were. For us, as for them, Jesus Christ was crucified. On us, as on them, the guilt of His blood lies. *Our danger* is the same, as theirs. To us, as to them, St. Peter preaches, in that most memorable sermon. You, he accuses, as he did them, of the guilt of that most precious blood. You he addresses as he did them; “Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.” To you, he offers, as he did them, “remission of your sins,” only, in baptism. To you, he says, as unto them, “Save yourselves, from this untoward generation.” My beloved, do you realize, that this is so? Do you consider what it has cost, that it might be so? Are you aware of the earnestness of God? Think, I beseech you, my beloved, of the earnestness of God. Was not He in earnest, who, that Peter might proclaim that Pentecostal Gospel, spared, from His bosom, the Only-Begotten, who, from all eternity, was, always, there? Was not He in earnest, who, for you, could look from heaven; and see His only Son, in that rude manger, and in that poor

shed, and in that mean shop? Could see Him fasting, all those forty days? Could see Him tempted, by that fearful adversary? Could see Him, wandering, alone, without a shelter; or tossed, in that frail fisher's boat, on the stormy Gennesaret; or hungering, even, for bread, along its shores? Was not He in earnest, who, for your salvation, gave up His darling, to be betrayed, and mocked, and buffeted, and spit upon? Was not He in earnest, who, that you might live, consented to His death; nailed Him to the cross; pierced Him to the heart; and heard Him, when He said, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Ah, my beloved, was there ever such an earnestness, as this, on earth, in heaven? And, can this all be, for your salvation; and you be spared, if you neglect it? Can this all be; and there be any other name, in which you may be saved? Can this all be, this Cross; this crown of thorns, these nails, this spear, so literally fulfilled, in every most minute particular, that you can read it all, in David, in Isaiah, in Zechariah: and you, take this, or that, at your mere will, of that which He ordains, for you, and yet be saved? Not wash in Siloam; and yet see? Not bathe in Jordan, and, yet be clean? Not believe in Jesus, not repent you of your sins, not arise and be baptized; and, yet be cleansed, and justified, and sanctified? If it can be so, then earnestness is nothing; and truth is nothing; and justice is nothing; and love is nothing. If it can be so, there is no sin; there is no hell; there is no heaven; there is no God. And the only foolishness, of which the fool is guilty,

is that, he does not say it out, instead, of, “in his heart.”

ii. But there is no one, that will dare to take this ground. The word of God, not only, but the voice of nature, would condemn him. Why is the earth a grave-yard, if there is no sin? Why do men blush, if sin is not a thing of guilt? What, but the fearful danger of our sins, gives conscience power, to make such cowards, of us all?

“Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat, under a weary life,
But, that the dread of something, after death—
The undiscovered country, from whose bourn,
No traveller returns—puzzles the will;
And makes us rather bear those ills, we have,
Than fly to others, that we know not of?”

These were the pricks—this sense of guilt, this fear of death, this dread, of that which must come after death—which drove those sinners, of the day of Pentecost, to the Apostles, for relief. And, to the agonizing question, which yearned out their souls, they answered, in the only words, which speak *deliverance*, from sin: “Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” As God, by Ananias, said to Saul, convinced as he was of his sins, and shrinking from their swift destruction, “Arise, and be baptized; and wash away thy sins.” To you, beloved, as to Saul, as to the sinners of the day of Pentecost, these gracious words address themselves. There

is but one deliverance, for all. The Crucified Himself declares it. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And, again, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Do not raise doubts, with Nicodemus. Do not make difficulties, with Naaman. Do not perish by water, like the men, who listened not to Noah. Nor, like the generation who resisted Jesus, and were swept away, in that fierce storm of blood and fire, which fell upon their city and their temple. Believe what St. Paul says, "According to His mercy, He saved us, by the washing of regeneration." Believe what St. Peter says, "Baptism, doth, also, now save us." Say, with that noble Ethiopian, to whom Philip preached the Gospel from Isaiah, "See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" And never doubt, that, as, to all those, who gladly received his word upon the day of Pentecost, so to you, "truly repenting, and coming unto" God, "by faith, He will grant" you "remission of" your sins, "and bestow upon" you "the Holy Ghost; that He will give" you "the blessing of eternal life, and make" you "partakers of His everlasting kingdom."

iii. To the lesson of our dangers and of our deliverances, the First Christian Baptism adds still the lesson of our *duties*. For, it is not true, as some slanderously affirm, and as more profanely practise, that the Church teaches, that baptism, of itself, insures Salvation. Turn, to the record of St. Luke. "Then, they that gladly received his word were baptized:" "and they

continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." *Baptized persons are bound to adhere steadfastly to the Apostles' doctrine.* It is their solemn profession. "Dost thou believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith, as contained in the Apostles' Creed?" "I do." *Baptized persons are to continue steadfastly in the Apostles' fellowship.* It was a fellowship of holiness. They are bound to be holy. It was a fellowship of charity. They are bound to be charitable. How beautiful their charity! They "sold their possessions and goods; and parted them to all men, as every man had need." *Baptized persons are to be steadfast in the breaking of bread.* "This do," their dying Saviour said, "in remembrance of Me." The first baptized did so, at every opportunity. Nay, they rejoiced to find the opportunity. At the very first, there was a daily Eucharist. At the rarest, it was weekly: as the disciples, whom Paul found at Troas, "came together," "upon the first day of the week, to break bread." *Baptized persons are to be steadfast "in prayer."* Not only, in their closets. Not only, with their families. But, in the Church. The first disciples were daily, with one accord, in the Temple. The Jewish worship was a daily worship. The Apostolic worship was a daily worship. And, in heaven, the Saints and Angels, who are "before the throne of God," "serve Him, day and night, in His Temple." Oh, that there were such an heart in you: who have the privilege of a weekly Eucharist, and the privilege of a daily service; only, to disregard them both.

How must such weary, of that new song, which rises, evermore, before the throne! How must such cloy, of that marriage supper of the Lamb, which is, forever, spread, in heaven!

But, the Lamb, whose blood was shed,
 Forces no one; nothing wastes:
 For the poor, His Board is spread;
 Heavenly food, for heavenly tastes!

Beloved, who have never been baptized, with you, the First Christian Baptism pleads, to-day, its powerful precedents. Mark the specific language, which it employs: "be baptized, every one of you." Consider, that he, who uttered it, was "filled with the Holy Ghost." Can you be saved, without forgiveness? He hath said, "be baptized," "for the remission of sins." Can you be saved, without holiness? He hath said, "be baptized," "and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Can words, so plain, mean nothing? If they mean any thing, must they not mean every thing? Can there be any of you, whom "*every one*" does not include? "Be baptized, every one of you!" *You will not!* But, God commands. And *dare* you disobey? *You dare not!* But, Christ invites. And *will* you refuse? *So many are no better for it!* Whose judge are you, besides your own? *You shrink from such responsibility!* Will God's law be any broader, for your being baptized? *You are afraid of falling!* Are you not fallen, now? *You are not good enough!* Who is? *You mean to!* When? Did you know, that the next grave will be yours? *Can* you know, that it will not?

Beloved, think upon these things. It is written, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." While there is water, make it sure! While that poor, pierced, precious, side still bleeds, "Arise, and be baptized." And, unto Him, who loved us, and washed us, from our sins, in His own blood," "to Him, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory and dominion, forever and ever. Amen."

SERMON XLIX.

THE FIRST COMMUNION.

1 CORINTHIANS XI. 23, 24.—The Lord Jesus, the same night, in which He was betrayed, took bread ; and, when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat ; this is My Body, which is broken, for you ; this do, in remembrance of Me.

ST. MATTHEW XXVI. 27, 28.—And, He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it : for, this is My blood of the New Testament ; which is shed, for many, for the remission of sins.

1 CORINTHIANS XI. 26.—For, as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death, until He come.

1 CORINTHIANS V. 7, 8.—For, even Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed, for us ; therefore, let us keep the feast.

THE Fall, the promise of the woman's seed, the birth of Cain and Abel, Abel's sacrifice of a lamb, and successive incidents, on the record of inspiration. All together, they occupy but half a page. And yet, their issues comprehend the world : and occupy eternity. It is like " Let there be light ; and there was light," or, " Lazarus, come forth." It is the sublimity of condensation. In the Fall, the race was helpless. No man could redeem his brother. And yet, redemption was the alternative of destruction. Indeed, destruction had ensued, already. " In the day, that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." But for the eternal forecast of that divine forbearance, by which the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world, redemption would

have been impossible. As it was, no man could redeem his brother. Hence the phraseology of the promise, "her seed;" the woman's seed. It could not be Cain; though, at his birth, Eve seems to have thought so; for he was the seed of a man. It could not be Abel: for he was the seed of a man. It could be none of the descendants of Adam; for each of them was the seed of a man. It could be none but Him, of Whom Isaiah said, "A Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son:" of Whom Gabriel said, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also, that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God:" of Whom St. Paul said, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." The woman's seed, the Apostle thus explains, is the Son of God, incarnate for the redemption of lost man. Pursue the words of Moses. "It," the woman's seed, "shall bruise thy head, and thou," the old serpent, the Devil, "shalt bruise His heel." The redemption is thus to be through suffering: the bruising of the Redeemer's heel; so graphic of the Cross, to which His blessed feet were nailed: a doctrine developed, afterwards, in the whole fabric of the Levitical dispensation; of which the key-note is that text of Moses, "it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul:" and made apparent by Isaiah, in his prophetic picture of that wondrous Sufferer, whom Philip preached, to Queen Candace's Treasurer, as Jesus; who

“poured out His soul unto death,” and “bare the sin of many,” and on Whom, “the Lord hath laid” “the iniquity of us all.” Of Whom St. Paul says, “in Whom we have redemption through His blood ;” St. John, “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin ;” St. Peter, “Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold ; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb, without blemish and without spot.” Moses, Isaiah, Paul, John and Peter teach us, thus, with one consent, that our Redeemer is the suffering Son of God ; incarnate for that end. And thus the central truth of Revelation—look at it forward, through Moses and Isaiah : look at it backward, through Paul and John and Peter—is the sacrifice of the Cross. It pleased Almighty God, that forty centuries should intervene between the primal sin, and the propitiating sacrifice. Never in all that time did the prefigurative blood dry from the earth. From the beasts which furnished clothes, for the first sinners, (which must have been for sacrifice ; since, meat was not permitted, before the flood,) and from the firstlings of his flock, which Abel offered to the Lord, until the blood, shed by the Roman sword, put out the altars, upon Mount Sion, there never ceased to be a shadow, from the Cross, cast backwards, in prefigurative victims. The Paschal Lamb was only one of this great cloud of witnesses. And, just before the Cross was reared, on which the perfect sacrifice was to be offered once for all, when the last commemoration of the Passover was kept, Jesus “took bread : and when He had

given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat ; this is My Body, which is broken for you ; this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner, also, He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in My Blood ; this do ye as oft as drink it, in remembrance of Me. For, as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death, until He come." Before He came, the bloody sacrifices, from Abel's lamb, to the last, that bled, before His Crucifixion, showed His death, till He came. They were *prefigurative* sacrifices. They were fore-shadows of that, which was to be. The substance was Christ. After He had come, the unbloody sacrifice of the Eucharist was to show His death, until He comes again. This is a *commemorative* sacrifice. It is the after-shadow of that, which has come. The substance is Christ. No virtue in the lacerated victim, or in the blood shed before He came. No virtue, in the bread, which is broken, or, in the wine which is poured out ; now that He has come. The Victim of the Cross, the only meritorious offering, before God. His merit, ours ; through faith, which works, by love.

The circumstances of the First Eucharist, like those of the First Baptism, and the First Confirmation, are simple but sublime. God was in human flesh. The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob. He was the God who made the world. And, yet, He had not where to lay His head. When He would keep for the last time the Passover, with His beloved, He had no house that He could call His own. He used a stran-

ger's house, a stranger's furniture, a stranger's meat and bread and wine. Happy stranger, to entertain the Lord of heaven and earth! None of the great ones of the world: "a man, bearing a pitcher of water!" It was the night of the betrayal. He knew it all, before. The treachery of a familiar friend. The price, that of the meanest slave. The clamour of the mob. The envy of the priests. The cruel sycophancy of Pilate. The blindfolding. The buffeting. The spitting on. The crown of thorns. The Cross. The nails. The spear. He knew it all. And, yet, while the iron was entering into His very soul, He sat down, in calmness and serenity, and affection; and broke the bread, and blessed it; and poured the cup, and blessed it; and, in the breaking of the bread, and pouring of the wine, anticipated the bruising and laceration of the Cross; and made Himself a living sacrifice, to be renewed in every age, in all the world, to all the faithful ones, that should be saved in Him: "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you: drink ye all of this; for this is my blood, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins: do this in remembrance of Me." How sublime, in its simplicity! The Son of God, a guest in His own world. The heart, which, on the morrow, was to be pierced through, pouring itself out, in tenderness, on them who were His all, on earth; and in His sorrow, as He knew, would all forsake Him. The celebration, for the last time, of His own Passover, which never once had failed, for fifteen hundred years. Its enlargement and perpetuation, as a spiritual and immor-

tal feast, the marriage-supper of the Lamb, spread, first, on earth. And the reliance on those crumbs of bread, and on that drop of wine, that they would last forever, and when the brass had rusted, and the marble crumbled, be His memorial, while the world should stand! How simple in its sublimity! and how sublime in its simplicity! Who else, but God, to dare it, to devise it, and to do it?

The precedents of the First Eucharist, in its circumstances, so simple, so sublime, would outreach the scope of any sermon. Only the most immediate can be noted, now. And, first, *its antiquity*. If I may speak so, it was fifteen hundred years old when it began. It was ordained in Egypt. It had been observed by the children of Israel in their generations. Wherever they were, in the wilderness, in captivity, on Mount Sion, they had kept it constantly. It was as old when Jesus Christ observed it last, as His Church was, when America was discovered; fourteen hundred and ninety and two years. As it now is, and as it was before He fulfilled it, it has been ordained for more than three and thirty centuries. There is nothing now so old on earth. Only the earth itself is older. Our second precedent is *its divine authority*. When the Jewish children should ask their parents, "What mean ye, by this service?" Moses instructed them to say, "It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover." In the original, it is Jehovah's Passover. And when the incarnate God sat last at it, He said, "I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

The Eucharist is thus a fulfilment of the Passover. Its fulfilment, as it is a Sacrament ; and so spiritual as well as natural ; an inward grace in an outward sign. Its fulfilment, as it is the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord ; 'Take, eat, this is My Body ; drink ye all of this, this is My Blood ! Only He could fulfil Jehovah's Passover, who was Himself Jehovah. The Eucharist, like the Passover, is of divine authority. Our third precedent, is *its universality*. A type never can be broader, deeper, higher, than the thing which it foreshows. Now, of the Passover, it is written, in the Book of Exodus, "All the congregation of Israel shall keep it." At the institution of the Eucharist, all that there was then of the Church were present. To them, He said, when He gave them the Cup, "Drink ye all of it." Of them it is written, "they all drank of it." And to go no farther, when three thousand were added unto the Apostles in holy baptism, they continued steadfastly, "in the breaking of the bread." Never a baptized person, in all the Apostolic age, nor for centuries after it, that came not to the Holy Eucharist, unless he was repelled by discipline. The invitation to it, universal now : "unto which, in God's behalf I bid you all, who are here present ; and beseech you, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, that ye will not refuse to come thereto, being so lovingly called and bidden, by God, Himself." And, now, observe *its naturalness*. When was love, ever, without a token ? When were lovers, ever, without visible pledges : from the broken sippence of the rustics, to the golden circlet which

knits hands and hearts and lives? Our nature in its twofoldness, is sacramental: and, therefore, sacraments are natural. Is not the God of grace, the God of nature? And must not He know what is in man? How natural in dying love, to ask to be remembered! How natural the means of the memorial! A little bread. A little wine. Silence, Sacredness, Solemnity; a prayer, a hymn, sighs, tears!

“Sweet, awful hour: the only sound
One gentle footstep gliding round;
Offering, by turns, on Jesus’ part,
The Cross, to every hand and heart.”

We rise to the next of its precedents, *its spirituality*. It could not be a sacrament without an outward sign; it would not be, without an inward grace. This is best stated by the Catechism—“What is the inward part, or thing signified?” “The Body and Blood of Christ which are spiritually taken and received by the faithful in the Lord’s Supper.” As Jesus said, “Take, eat, this is My Body which is broken for you; drink ye all of it, for this is My Blood.” As St. Paul said, “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” As the Church says, “Wherefore it is our duty to render most humble and hearty thanks”—Eucharist means thanksgiving—“to Almighty God, our heavenly Father, for that He hath given His Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, not only to die for us, but, also, to be our spiritual food and sustenance in that holy sacrament:” and

again, “grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, and to drink His blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls, washed, through His most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us.” And the last precedent of the First Eucharist which we are now to note is *its eternity*. St. Paul expressly says, “As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death, till He come.” And the beloved John, who saw beyond the veil, had glimpses of the Eucharist, in heaven: “Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb.” How beautiful, how blessed! They that come meekly to this heavenly feast are certain to be fed for evermore. Isaiah knew it almost as clearly as St. John. “They shall not hunger nor thirst,” the evangelic Prophet says, “neither shall the heat nor sun smite them; for He that hath mercy on them, shall lead them; even by the springs of water shall He guide them.” And the prophetic Evangelist; “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat: for, the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

“Hunger, thirst, disease unknown,
On immortal fruits, they feed;
Them, the Lamb, amidst the throne,
Shall, to living fountains, lead;

“Joy and gladness banish sighs ;
Perfect love dispels their fears ;
And, for ever, from their eyes,
God, shall wipe away their tears.”

Beloved ones, who have been called, week after week, since Lent first dawned, to seek and to secure the grace of Confirmation, and to-day “obey the calling,” the Holy Eucharist will thus become your blessed privilege and bounden duty. Your blessed privilege ; for, so, the Rubric, “there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time, as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed :” your bounden duty, as another Rubric teaches, “it is expedient that every person, thus baptized, should be confirmed, by the Bishop, so soon after his baptism as conveniently may be : that so he may be admitted to the Holy Communion.” As the three thousand of the day of Pentecost, when they had been baptized for the remission of their sins, and confirmed for the gift of the Holy Ghost, “continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.”

“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us : therefore, let us keep the feast !” Beloved, is it in your hearts, to stand against the logic of this glorious Easter outburst ? Is there one of you, for whom He was not sacrificed ? Is there one of you, upon whom, but for the sprinkling of that Paschal blood, the wing of the death-angel must not cast that dreadful shadow, which will darken, through eternity ? And when He died, for every one of you ; when the sprinkling of His blood is

upon every Christian brow ; when He tears His heart out, that you may feed on it, and drink its blood ; and bids you, come, and welcome—" Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us : therefore, let us keep the feast,"—is there, among you, one, that will not ? Is it you, dear child, upon whose forehead, the baptismal dew yet sparkles ; and, who, to-day, are to renew its sacred obligations ? So young ! And, already, so hard-hearted ! Not to come to Jesus, when He calls you ! Not to come to Him, who took you, for His darlings, out of all the world ! Dear children, He was, once, a child, like you. He has His child's heart, now, in heaven. Lay down your heads, upon it. Let its beatings temper yours ; and tune them, to its tenderness : and, in the sweet confidingness of little children, give yourselves up, to be the nestlings of His love. Or, is it you, my brother, or my sister, who, in the noon of life, are melted by its fires, and burdened with its toils, and tortured with its trials ? And can you afford to lose the rest, which only He can promise, and the refreshment, which He alone can give ? Or if your life, thus far, has overflowed with plenty, and been sheltered from the storm, and not shot at, yet, in any of its darlings : can you turn from Him on His Cross ; and spurn away from you His tokens ; and refuse His last request, to do this in remembrance of His love ? Or, is it you, whose shadows lengthen, now, upon your path ; with whom, the almond tree is now in blossom : who begin to feel the grasshopper, a burden : is it you that will not keep the feast, which Jesus spreads for you ?

Is it the thirtieth, fortieth, fiftieth, time, that He has bidden you, to His Easter joy? Can you be sure, that you will ever hear its cheerful call again? Were there not some, that once refused His feast? Do you remember what He said: "Not one of those men, that were bidden, shall taste of My supper?" What, if that be the marriage-supper of the Lamb! What, if the guests all enter, without you! What, if the door be shut! Think, my beloved, if the door be shut! Blessed Saviour, who died, for us, and rose again, that Thou mightest open the kingdom of heaven to all believers, be Thou, to us, the Door, and take us into Thee; that sheltered, in our trembling, but, triumphant faith, within Thy pierced side, we may pass, through the grave and gate of death, to our joyful resurrection: and unto Thee, with the eternal Father and the Holy Spirit, shall be the glory and the praise, now, and for evermore.

SERMON L,

NAAMAN.

2 KINGS v. 13.—My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?

IT is curious to see, how much sounder and better the philosophy, which uprightness of purpose and simplicity of heart bring to any question of morals or of religion, than all the teaching of the schools without them! Here was a great and powerful man, afflicted with a disease for which no human means even professed a cure, turning angrily away, from mere pride and self-conceit, from the man of God, in whose power to relieve him, he had the fullest confidence. He had come a long journey to consult him. He had brought with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. He would have travelled a much greater distance, he would have given a much larger sum, to gain his object. But, because the prophet's treatment of him was not just such as he had anticipated, because he could not be cured in his own way, he turned, and went away in a rage. His servants, having no pride or

temper to disturb their vision, regard the matter in its true and obvious light. They consider his past sufferings, and the sufferings yet in store for him. They call to mind what, for the captain of the Syrian host, was a much sorer evil, the disgrace with which the leprosy loaded its victim, and the exile which it would require from all the avenues to fame, and all the abodes of honour. They remember the alacrity, with which the journey had been undertaken, and the profuseness, with which he had laden his chariot with treasures. They knew, moreover, their master's fortitude and firmness, for he was a mighty man in valour, and that no tedious course of medicine, no surgeon's cauterity or knife, would have deterred him from the cure. Made bold by true disinterestedness, they waive all scruple or reserve, and in the honest language of sincerity, and with such arguments of blended wisdom and benevolence as nature never fails to prompt, they address him with this simple expostulation—"My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith unto thee, Wash, and be clean?" It was a word fitly spoken—or as the expressive Hebrew idiom is,—a word upon its wheels. It found an easy entrance into his heart. His pride was checked. His temper subsided. He saw his inconsistency. In a single word, he was humbled. Like the prodigal, he came to himself. Like the prodigal, he set about the instant reparation of his error. Like the prodigal, he turned in an accepted time. "Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, accord-

ing to the saying of the man of God ; and his flesh came again, like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

It seems to me, and it shall be the purpose of what remains of this discourse to illustrate and establish this opinion, that the expostulation of the servants of the Syrian leper comprehends the whole philosophy of their case, who, either being unenlightened, or but partially influenced, by the religion of Jesus Christ, receive it not at all, or but in part—that if they were required to do some great thing, they would more readily comply than with its simple and unostentatious terms—and that if to them, as to Naaman, the reasoning of the text could be brought home, they would imitate his compliance, and secure to themselves a similar reward. It may seem a rash and startling assertion, but it is capable I believe of the most complete demonstration, that nothing which has ever been proposed to mankind under the name of religion, however rigid, burthensome, and cruel its requisitions, has, on that account, been rejected ; while on the contrary, much of the opposition which the true religion has had to encounter, has been advanced against it, because its yoke was easy, and its burthen was light. Cast your eyes over the map of the world. Call up before you the false religions, or the corruptions of the true, which have sought or are seeking the suffrages of mankind. See how many of them you can find that are not stained with human blood. Find, if you can, a single one of them, that, in some way or other, did not bind upon its followers heavy burthens and grievous to be borne. And yet see with what willingness, yea, with

what eagerness, its sternest demands are met, and its most sanguinary laws obeyed. What shape of suffering and of torture can be thought of, that in Hindostan has not been endured, yea, courted, to propitiate the gods? Hunger, thirst, nakedness, the distention or dislocation of the limbs, the sacred stream of Ganges, the flame of the Suttee, or the wheels of the ponderous idol-car, are all approved and practised ways of access to the favour of their miserable divinities. What thousands bear the toils, and brave the dangers of Arabian deserts, to present themselves before the impostor's shrine at Mecca: and what tens of thousands court the chance of death in arms, as the assured passport to the Prophet's sensual paradise! What vigils, what fastings, what penance, lasting and severe, has the corrupted church of Rome imposed upon her members! What sums uncounted, in masses for their souls, have been bestowed by dying devotees! In short, look where you will, is not the universal cry, What shall I give? What shall I bear? What great things shall I do? And can the spirit of the false religions, one and all, and of the corrupted systems of the true, be better expressed than in those words which the prophet Micah puts into the mouth of the anxious, but misguided heathen—"Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"—Now whence, since

the fact is proved, and every page that you shall read in the religious history of man will furnish added testimony, whence this strange and seemingly unnatural determination of men's spirits? Why should they thus bring burthens upon themselves, and steadfastly persist in enduring privation and pain? There is no other exception to the acknowledged law of nature, which dictates self-preservation. There is no other case of men's deliberate and voluntary quest of suffering, just for suffering's sake. What is the key to this anomaly? How can this strange enigma be resolved? By the simple admission of man's consciousness of these two principles, both clearly revealed in Scripture, and amply confirmed by experience, that he is a religious being, and that he is a sinful being. There is in man, universally, a conviction of his obligation to an Intelligence superior to himself: this is what I mean by man's consciousness, that he is a religious being. For religion is but another name for obligation, as its composition shows; and though it include ultimately our duties to men, its primary reference is to that source of all duty, our obligation to God. This consciousness may, it is true, be distorted by ignorance and vice, till the image it presents of the divine nature shall be, as among many of the nations of the world it is, hideous and abominable, beyond any thing that can ever be imagined to exist in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. And it is as true, that it may be so weakened and obscured, that it shall scarcely seem to exercise the slightest influence, spiritual or moral, upon his duties here or his

prospects hereafter. All that is contended for is, that it never has been, and cannot be effaced. That the impression of it is branded, as it were, into the very texture of the soul. That it is inseparable from that image of God, which constitutes man's true pre-eminence above the brutes; his relative degradation or exaltation, being always just in proportion to the strength and purity, with which that image is preserved. And this opinion is far from resting on assumption merely. What is a counterfeit, but evidence of the existence of the genuine? Idols are but counterfeits of the true God. Their existence among every people, where the true God is not truly worshipped, is evidence conclusive of the position that the conviction of his obligation to a superior Intelligence, is co-extensive with the nature of man—that man is universally a religious being. And the conviction of man's sinfulness, is co-extensive with his conviction of the being of God. There has never been found a nation that has not some tradition of an earlier age, when man was happier, because more virtuous, than he is now. There has never been found a nation which had not some notion, however obscure, or imperfect, or distorted, of the necessity of propitiating the divine favour. There has never lived a man who, whatever his theoretical pretensions might be, did not feel, and at times indirectly betray the feeling, that he came short of, or transgressed the duty, which he owed to God. Whatever might be his disposition to extenuate or apologize, whatever he might think of God's forbearance and forgiveness, however he might doubt or deny a final judgment, or a

future retribution, there never yet was a man who by his efforts to conceal some portions of his conduct, and to set off others in a favourable light, did not confess himself a sinner. These two principles established, man's consciousness that there is a God, and that he has committed and continually does commit offences against Him, the remainder is of easy consequence. The offended Being, he reasons, must be propitiated. The more costly the offering, the more probable its acceptance. The duty which should be rooted and grounded in humility, becomes thus, matter of ambition. His pride is called to his assistance. He essays to merit, by doing or by suffering, the favour which he feels that he has lost. He resolves to do some great thing, that shall insure upon the simple principle of value received, his present forgiveness, and if there be such a thing—and it seems, dream-like, to float in the traditions of all nations, and to flit before the mental eye of every human being—his future happiness.

Such seems to be the simple account, indicated by Scripture, and confirmed by history and by observation, of their case who, in the blindness of nature, unable to rid themselves of the inwrought conviction that there is a God who claims their duty, unable to resist the testimony of their own consciousness that their duty to Him has not been discharged, have sought in all nations, and in every age, by costly sacrifices, by voluntary mortification, by the severest self-inflicted tortures, to avert His dreaded wrath, and to propitiate His favour. It is not pretended that in all, or in any part of this, reason has

been justified of her children : so far from it, its unreasonableness, its absurdity, its violence to nature's holiest laws, are evidences of its truth—for these are they of whom St. Paul declared, that professing themselves to be wise, they became fools ; and if men could have found out God, and finding Him, could have discovered their duty and their happiness, by their mere wisdom, then there had been no need of revelation. All that we do contend for is, that the theory so stated is the truth, as Scripture teaches, and as observation proves ; and that being true, it shows not only the wretched bondage into which mankind have brought themselves, but the utter inefficacy of all its hard and grinding requisitions, to secure their present peace, or to influence their future destiny.

How different from this, the spirit and the instructions of the blessed Gospel of our Lord ! At its first dawning on the world, angels proclaimed peace upon earth, good will to men ! And He Himself, continually referring to the prophetic descriptions of Messiah's peaceful reign, had ever in His mouth as the text and theme of all His plans and all His purposes, I came not to destroy, but to save—the Son of Man is come not to destroy men's lives, but to save them ! And these words *are* the key and clue to all that Jesus ever said or ever did. He *did* come, that He might save men's lives. And He proclaimed terms of salvation, which should comprehend even the chief of sinners ; rules of duty, which bring with them their own reward ; assistances in their performance, which supply to them who seek for them, all

but the will; and a recompense in heaven, sure as the justice, and rich as the mercy of God. All that the sinner has to do, is to humble himself to an acceptance of these generous conditions. All that he has to bear, is the divesting of himself of all idea of merit in the transaction. All that he has to give, is a willing and obedient heart—obedient to its Saviour, as an evidence that it is willing to be saved by Him. The sacrifices of God—the only offerings which He demands or will accept—are a troubled spirit: a broken and a contrite heart He never will despise. Judge for yourselves, brethren, whether the tender mercy of God could be more richly manifested, than in the revelation of His Son. Judge whether they who, in all ages and nations, have shown their readiness to do some great thing for the propitiation of His favour, should not much rather approve themselves obedient, when He saith, wash and be clean. Judge whether they who, in a dispensation of such tenderness and love, still choose their own way before His, can fairly claim the advantages it proffers. Alas! that it should be so: the spirit of Naaman is not shown in those only who know not God. Even in the pure and genial light of Christendom, there are men who will prefer to His own Jordan, the rivers Abana and Pharpar. Men, who in the daily acknowledgment of their manifold infirmities, and in the daily desire to be redeemed from them, rather than not be washed in their own way, will run the awful risk—I put it solemnly to their own judgments, whether it is not a risk, and to their own consciences, whether it be not awful!—of never being

clean. To all such, I would in all sincerity hold up the picture of the Syrian leper. To all such, I would address in all respectful tenderness, the expostulation of his servants—"My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" I know they will reply, and I anticipate the objection, the being clean cannot depend on being washed. Perhaps so! But may it not depend upon the submission of man's will to God, which being washed implies? Do you, my Christian brethren—I speak to fathers and to mothers, and through them I speak to all—do you deal with your children, on your own terms, or upon theirs? Hath not Jesus Christ expressly said, Except ye humble yourselves, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven? Would Naaman's flesh, think you, have come again to him like a child's, if, like a little child, he had not first gone down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan? I speak, brethren beloved, as unto wise men; judge ye what I say! And may God, who is the fountain of all wisdom, so guide you, that in all things you shall not only judge, but do, aright; and to His great name shall be the greater praise!

SERMON LI.

H O L Y B A P T I S M.

ACTS II. 38.—Be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.

I THINK there must be many persons, even in this Christian land, who do not know, that these words are in the Holy Scriptures. For many, I am sure, there are, who heartily desire to do God's will, and own its record in His word, who, yet, are not baptized. Such persons, I believe sincerely, are not aware that baptism is a positive injunction of the word of God; and "necessary to salvation." It is to no purpose to ask, how this can be. Familiarity takes off the edge of truth. Prejudices of education form a second nature. The example of the many is like atmospheric pressure. Whatever be the explanation, the fact is so. The word of God expressly says, to all who ask, "What shall we do?" "be baptized every one of you." And, yet, multitudes, who certainly desire to be saved, and to know what they shall do to be saved, and to do what they should know ought to be done, are not baptized.

It is for the immediate benefit of such, that the words of the text have been parted from the context; and been presented, by themselves. In an enumeration of particulars, one is often overlooked. Perhaps, it has been so, in the present instance. Perhaps, in dwelling on the injunction, to "repent," and on the condition, "in the name of Jesus Christ," the injunction, "be baptized," on which the end desired, "remission of sins," is equally dependent, may have been overlooked. But God's words may not be so slighted. And as he that should divide "repent ye," from "believe the Gospel," would certainly go wrong, so they who mutilate the text, removing baptism from its due connection with repentance and with faith, have need to look to it, lest their sins should not be remitted. Converted Saul had certainly, not "so learned Christ." For when Ananias had said to him, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord," "he arose, and was baptized." I would to God, that you, beloved, whosoever you may be, that have not been, would arise, and do, as he did.

And if you will not, at least, say, why you will not! Is it from the impression, that when the Scriptures speak of baptism, as essential to salvation, they speak of an effusion of the Spirit? Why, then, did Jesus Christ explain His words to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," by saying, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit?" Why, then, did the Apostle Paul, in writing to the

Bishop Titus, say, "According to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration," or the washing in which we are born again, "and the renewing of the Holy Ghost?" Why, when the Ethiopian treasurer has been taught of Jesus, by the Deacon Philip, does he say to him, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" And, why, when the Apostle Peter was divinely sent to Cesarea, to Cornelius, the question at his mouth, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost, as well, as we?" What can be clearer, than that baptism with water has its place in the plan of salvation, as well as spiritual gifts? That as these are divinely promised, so that is of divine commandment? That God has joined the two; and therefore no man should put them asunder. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Or is it, that you do not arise and be baptized, because you can see no connection, between the outward act and inward grace? Just so thought Naaman. He could not see why Abana and Pharpar were not quite as good as Jordan. And yet, till he had waived his high philosophy, and humbled his proud heart, and gone and washed in Jordan seven times, he could not be made clean.

Or is it, that you would not rest on ordinances, and are content to hear the Gospel, and hope to be justified by faith? But, what is an ordinance but that which is ordained of God? Is hearing the word of any use, ex-

cept, because it is an ordinance of God? And did not He who died to save us, join inseparably with holy baptism, the faith by which we may be justified? "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Or is it, that you are not willing to declare yourselves upon the side of God; and take your part with Him, against the world, the devil, and the flesh? But how is this? Have you the right to do so? Are you not His who made you? Are you less His, in that He died for you? Less His, for all that sweat, and all those tears, and all that blood; that agony, and Cross, and death; the patience which still waits, the mercy which yet spares, the love which is still pleading for your souls? Ah, my beloved, is it you for whom He underwent that baptism with His own heart's blood, who now refuse to take His name upon you at the Font; and spurn away from you His right to claim your service, Who has made you twice His own?

Or is it, finally, that you are fearful lest you should not keep your pledge, that you refuse to take it; the fear of falling that prevents your rising at the call of God? As if His law were broader for your baptism. Or His holiness more holy. Or His eye more searching. Or His judgment more severe. As if the same Who made you did not know your frame. As if the grace which makes you, could not keep you, His. As if the surest welcome were not his, who brings no offering but a contrite heart. As if the greatest in His kingdom were not the least little child. If it were not

all, as He hath said by Zechariah, "Not by might, nor by power; but by My Spirit, saith the Lord."

Baptism is the institution of Jesus Christ. "Go ye," He said to His Apostles, "and make disciples of all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." And it was an institution designed by Him, to be observed by all who would be saved. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "According to His mercy," saith St. Paul, "He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." "Even baptism doth also now save us," saith St. Peter. "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

According to the institution of the Saviour, was the practice of His Apostles. No sooner had they received power from on high, than Peter, opening his mouth, and speaking for the rest, preached unto the people at Jerusalem, Jesus Christ and Him Crucified. And, when his preaching pricked their heart, and they inquired of him, and of the rest, what shall we do? the answer was, as you have heard, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." Then they that gladly received his word, saying, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation," were baptized. And the same day, there were added to them about three thousand souls. It was so,

everywhere, and always. Does Philip, the Deacon, preach the Gospel in Samaria? As many as believe the things which he says concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ are baptized, both men and women. Is Saul converted by a voice from heaven? One is sent to him, to exhort him to arise and be baptized. Are Cornelius and his family to be brought in, as the first fruits of the Gentiles unto Christ? Peter the Apostle is sent by God Himself, that water may be brought, and they baptized. The Lord opens the heart of Lydia, that she attends to the preaching of St. Paul; and she is baptized and her household. The jailer, that has charge of Paul and Silas, is alarmed, and asks, "Sirs, what shall I do to be saved?" And the answer is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." And he is baptized, he, and all his, straightway. And, finally, to name no more, when the Apostle Paul falls in, at Ephesus, with some that had been John's disciples, and had received his baptism, he first instructs them that they should believe in Jesus Christ; and then they are baptized into His name. From the epistles of St. Paul it is apparent that the Churches, to whom they chiefly are addressed, had been baptized into Christ. St. Peter teaches, that, as of old, in the ark, so now, in the Church, men must be saved by water. St. John speaks of baptismal water, with the sacramental blood, as bearing, with the Spirit, here, on earth, the testimony of Jesus Christ. And in the Revelation, the new name that shall be written upon him that overcometh, and the robes that have

been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, are but prophetic figures, to describe the circumstances and show the results of holy baptism. What was done by the Apostles, they who succeeded to them did. Baptism was co-extensive with belief in Christ. And never ceased to be, until the violent revulsion of the Continental Reformation, in bursting the despotic bonds of Rome, broke also from the restraints of ancient order, and the authority of the old faith. Of eighteen hundred years that have been named after the name of Christ, more than fifteen hundred passed without the thought of an unbaptized Christianity: more than fifteen hundred bore unbroken, universal testimony, to the reception, by the Church, of that commandment of her Saviour, "Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them;" more than fifteen hundred shrunk from the very thought, of separating the washing of regeneration, in the divine provision for salvation, from the renewing of the Holy Ghost; more than fifteen hundred bore but one unvarying answer to the question of the day of Pentecost, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?—Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." Whence the authority proceeded, to divide what God hath joined together; how the new revelation was attested, which has set aside the old; what the reliance is for being saved without baptism, any more than for being saved without faith, when Jesus Christ Himself hath said, "He that believeth *and* is baptized shall be saved;" judge for yourselves, dear brethren, as in the sight of Him who sees

the heart. For us, we cannot so preach Christ. What the Apostle Paul taught, we must teach. What the whole Church throughout the world, through the long reach of fifteen hundred years, received and held, we must receive and hold, as the true mind of Christ. We remember, who hath said, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." We remember, that a very angel, that should preach another Gospel than that which the Apostles preached, would be accursed. We remember where it is written, "If any man shall take away from the words of this book, God shall take away his part out of the book of life." Search the Scriptures, my beloved: search them daily, with devout, believing hearts, whether these things are so.

Baptism grows out of the necessity of our fallen nature, and exactly meets it. Baptism grows out of the necessity of the Fall. As its inevitable consequence, we are all born in sin; born, that is, subject to the penalty of sin, and with a nature subject unto sin. In both these respects, baptism exactly meets our sad necessity.

Baptism is a new birth. How came we sinners, all? By natural birth. "Behold," says David, for us all, "I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me." And St. Paul speaks of us all, "as children of wrath, by nature." If we were born to this inheritance of wretchedness, and left to it, our case were hard, indeed. But, God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, has not left us so. Whereas the teeming womb of nature, for that it was

cursed for sin, could only bring us forth the heirs of sin and death, He graciously provided for us, that the relief might more than meet the curse, a death to sin not only, but a new birth unto righteousness; that, being by nature born in sin, and children of wrath, we might thereby be made the children of grace. Baptism is thus a new birth, from a state of wrath, into a state of grace. The state of wrath is the just penalty of sin. The state of grace is the free gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Left in the one, we are without God, and without hope, here, to be the victims, through eternity, of restlessness, and wretchedness, and shame. From this, the righteous condemnation of our sinfulness, no man can deliver himself; no man can redeem his brother. And, yet—the Apostle Paul may well exclaim, “Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the knowledge and wisdom of God!”—deliverance is provided, and redemption is effected through the divine propitiation of the Cross. From the free fountain opened there, in the dear heart of Jesus Christ, for sins and for uncleanness, the wave of baptism flows. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son,” says the Apostle John, “cleanseth from all sin.” “And now, why tarriest thou?” said Ananias to Saul. “Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.” “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ,” said the Apostle Peter, “for the remission of sins.” By nature, born in sin and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace.

Again, baptism is the birth of a new nature. Dying

in it unto sin, we rise again unto righteousness. Jesus Christ died, not to redeem us, from the penalty of sin alone, but from its power. He “gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity ; and purify us unto Himself, as a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” If it had been possible to redeem us from death, without also redeeming us from sin, the redemption, if we may say it reverently, had been in vain. It would have been the ground of that absurd and impious conclusion, which St. Paul so earnestly rebukes : “Let us continue in sin, that grace may abound.” But sin is not more hateful to God, than it is hurtful to man. Man was made in the image of God. He was godlike. That, which God hates, could not but hurt him. In truth, it did destroy him. And man can no more be restored to happiness, and be a sinner, than God can favour sin, and yet be holy. In both, if we may say it, it is so, from the necessity of both their natures. Hence, the death of Jesus Christ, besides delivering us from wrath, and admitting us to grace, contemplates also the restoration in us, of the divine original. For this end, the Son of God became man, that He might take us unto Himself ; that so we might be partakers of His holiness : we, in Him, and He, in us. Hence, all the Scriptural figures, which treat of union with Christ, “I am the Vine ; ye are the branches.” And again, “Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” Now this ingrafting of the branches into the living vine, that they may live in it ; this incorporation of the members into the living and life-giving body, that they

may be one with it, are realized in holy baptism. "By one Spirit," says St. Paul to the Corinthians, "are we all baptized into one body." "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ," he writes to the Galatians, "have put on Christ." To the Ephesians, he writes, "There is one body and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism." And to the Romans, "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so, we, also, should walk in newness of life." A text, so beautifully amplified, explained, and applied, in the baptismal service; "remembering always, that baptism doth represent unto us our profession; which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him, that, as He died and rose again for us, so should we, who are baptized, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness; continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections; and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living." And, therefore, are we taught, in our inimitable Catechism, not only that, in baptism, from being, by nature, born in sin and children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace; but, that its inward and spiritual grace is a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.

I shall be asked, now—for, of the doubts, which men will raise, as to how they shall be saved, there is no end,—is the blessing of the Sacrament irrespective of the character of the receiver? Hear what the Saviour saith: "He that *believeth* and is baptized;" and what St. Peter saith, "*Repent*, and be baptized."

I shall be asked, is there merit, then, in its reception, that is accounted of, in our salvation? Hear what St. Paul hath said: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration." Hear what St. Peter saith: "The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Hear what the Church, preaching the Gospel, saith, in the Catechism: "I heartily thank our Heavenly Father that He hath called me to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

I shall be asked still farther, is salvation certain to baptized believers? I can give no authority so good, as His assurance, who hath died to save us: "He that believeth, and is baptized, *shall* be saved;" nor any exposition of His gracious meaning, so entitled to your confident reception, as that text of holy Paul: "There is, therefore, now, no condemnation, to them which are in Christ Jesus"—which baptized believers are—"who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit:" for, "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

And, now, beloved, I surely am entitled to say, with Ananias, to you, who still, like Saul, are unbaptized, "Why tarriest thou?"

You mean to come! Well, so you have, this twenty, thirty, fifty years. Suppose, that, now, you come! Come, while the light still lasts, to see the way. Forsake the world: before, in sickness, and infirmities, and death, it turns its back on you. Draw nigh to God; before you

stumble, over some new grave : and wake up, not in Christ. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might : for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

You would come, if you saw, that they who have come, were the better for it ! But, do you know how much worse they might have been, if they had not come ? Do you know how much better they might be, if they had the benefit of your example ? Were it not better for you to judge yourselves, than them ? And if the Judge of all still bears with them, why should not you ?

But you are not yet good enough to be baptized ! As if the man that last fell overboard, had said, he was not safe enough to need a spar ! Or some sick girl should turn her back upon the doctor, because, not well enough to see him ! *Not good enough*, dear brother ! Make haste, to come, then, before the devil whispers to you that you are ; and coming thus, in your own fancied merit, God, who sees the heart, despise, and cast you off. *Not good enough to come !* Then come at once. Come to the Font. Come to the Cross of Christ. Take to your burning brow, that cooling wave. Take, to your aching heart, that cleansing blood. For you, His side was pierced. For you, that stream came out. For you, this fountain flows. Come, while the Church invites. Come, while the Spirit waits. Come, while the Saviour pleads.

SERMON LII.

EXCUSES.

MANY people seem to think that the amount of their responsibility to God, depends upon themselves. For example. It was their misfortune to be born of parents, who either did not know, or disregarded their duty, to their children, to bring them to their Lord, in holy baptism. They have themselves attained to better understanding of the subject. They have perhaps brought their own children to the font. Themselves, no argument, no influence, prevails to bring. Again, there are baptized persons,—some grafted into the Church in infancy ; some in their later years,—who still keep back, although they send their sons and daughters, to receive it, from “the laying on of hands.” And still, again, there are some who have embraced that precious privilege, and professed “before many witnesses,” its “good profession,” who, yet, year after year, “abstain from the Lord’s table, and separate from their brethren, who come to feed upon the banquet of that most heavenly food.” And this they do, lest they increase the weight of their responsibility to God. As if, by their receiving

baptism, confirmation, or the Holy Communion, they should add to God's commandments, or increase His hatred against sin. As if they were not all His creatures. As if responsibility, to the extent of all their powers, were not the law of moral beings. As if the knowledge of the rule were not the ground of duty, among men. As if the heart did not lie open before God, and the attempt to escape from Him, as in the garden of the first transgression, exaggerate the guilt of disobedience. Dear brethren, who adopt these views, you make the Gospel harder than the Law. You turn the means of grace, into measures of condemnation. You treat your Saviour with distrust; and spurn that gracious Spirit, who comes to you, to be your Comforter. Where is your faith? Where is your love? Where is the spirit of a little child? If you would, you cannot take yourselves out of the hands of God. And, if you could, why should you? How much better to take His word. To lean upon His arm! To lose yourselves, in His deep love! He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." He is not "strict to mark what is done amiss," in any who put their trust in Him. He looks upon the Cross; and is reconciled to the very chief of sinners, that comes bending to Him, and bewails the burden of his sins. In holy baptism, He gives them, through the faith that is in Christ, remission of their sins, and the "new birth to righteousness." In "the laying on of hands," the heavenly grace is offered, to make them His forever, and conform them,

more and more, to the divine and holy Pattern. And, in the Holy Supper, the Saviour gives Himself, to all who will receive Him, to be their spiritual food and sustenance, that they may live and grow in Him.

Many people withhold themselves from the appointed means of grace, from a fear that they are not good enough to use them. They freely admit their duty to be baptized, to be confirmed, and to communicate. They profess an earnest desire to do so. But, they are not yet good enough. *When*, they expect to be, or *how*, if you inquire of them, they cannot accurately say. They entertain a vague reliance, that, somehow, and at some time, something will be done for them, to set them free from this captivity. Do they remember, that, of the two, who went together to the Temple, to pray, the one, that went home justified, was he, whose only cry was, "God, be merciful to me a sinner"? Do they consider that self-distrust is not a plant of natural growth in human hearts, and must be in them from the Spirit; and is so far, the proof and pledge, that He is striving in them, to win them, if they only will, for God? Have they ever thought what a delusion of the enemy it would be, for a sinner who, as such, is undeserving of the least of all God's mercies—the sun that lights his path, the breeze that cools his brow—to feel, for one moment, that he was good enough, to be new-born in holy baptism, or to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost in confirmation, or to feed upon the spiritual food which Jesus gives Himself to be, in the Holy Communion? If baptism be, as the

Apostle taught upon the day of Pentecost, “for the remission of sins;” if “the laying on of hands” be for the gift of the renewing Spirit; if the body and blood of Christ be the sole nurture of the spiritual life: have they deliberately reflected on the state in which, they must be, while they are without them? Are they sick? And do they refuse to take the medicine, which utmost skill prescribes, until they shall feel better? Are they weak? And do they reject the arm which is held out to help them, until they come to walk alone? Are they hungry? And do they therefore spurn the hand that brings them bread? Besides. If goodness be the qualification for some, why not for all, the means of grace? If men are so shut out from the Lord’s table, why not also from the Lord’s house? If they must not, for that reason, seek His grace, from the Apostles’ hands, in confirmation, on what ground can they expect it from them, in the reading of the Scriptures, which the same hands, guided by the same Spirit, have indited? If they are not good enough to come to Him, to be washed and so made clean, how can they be to approach His throne, with saints and prostrate seraphim, in prayer? Is there not, in all this, more or less of will-worship? Are not such persons, self-deceived? *Is* it humility, that troubles them? Does humility know better than its teachers? Is humility, a dweller with self-will? Is there humility in being obstinate? Do they, who know their ignorance, refuse instruction? Do they, who feel that they are sick, reject the physician? Do drowning men take time to think, if they

will grasp the nearest spar? Dear brethren, whom these faithful words describe, revise your case and conduct, before God. Search the Scriptures, for one text, that makes man's merit the condition of God's mercy. Look in the Prayer Book, for one place, where words that do not own their sinfulness, are put into the mouth of chiefest saints. "Let a man examine himself," saith the Apostle, "and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." "We are not worthy," say the great company of prostrate priests, in the name of the whole communion of Christians, upon earth, "we are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Thy table: but Thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy: grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, and to drink His blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us."

There are many people, who have never given to the subject a moment's thought, in all their lives; and who, if they could, would make their carelessness about it, the rule of their pastor's teaching and of the Church's practice. They are forever buying farms, or yokes of oxen; and must therefore be excused. "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." If the knell of death, which, every hour, rings out in all their ears, fails to arrest these careless souls; if they can meet a coffin at each corner, and walk all their lives among new graves, and yet live

only for the life that is, the preacher's words would but be wasted for their use. Meanwhile, that solemn Scripture stands, however unregarded, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee!" Meanwhile, the expostulation of the faithful Church must still be made, however ineffectual, "Consider earnestly with yourselves, how little such feigned excuses will avail before God. Those who refused the feast in the Gospel, because they had bought a farm, or would try their yokes of oxen, or because they were married, were not so excused, but counted unworthy of the heavenly feast."

There are some people, whose apprehensions about other souls keep them from what so much concerns their own. They would be glad to be baptized, or to be confirmed, or to go to the Holy Communion; but how can they, when so many go unworthily! As if they were the judges, in the place of God. As if their erring brethren needed more of charity from them, than they themselves from Him. As if their prototype, the Pharisee, who judged himself so much more righteous than "this publican," had been so judged of the Lord. As if the one rule for us all to go by, were not that of Jesus to the curious Apostle, "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me!"

There are some communicants, so called, in modern phrase,—which should be, as in better days it was, the synonym of Christian—who, in a strange forgetfulness of their high privilege, take it upon themselves to be, or not to be, partakers of this Holy Supper, as they think fit. I would have such consider whether they

can justly, whether they can safely, do so. *Justly*, since what forbids, if they may slight God's feast, that he who is the steward of God's mysteries, and should be jealous of the honour of his Master's table, should pass them by, when they next condescend to come, as they before, turned from his Lord? Or *safely*, since they never should have come, but in the faith which feeds upon the broken body and the streaming blood of Jesus Christ, made spiritual as the life of their dead souls; without whose constant nurture, they must cease to live. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." Let them not say, It is another altar; I communicate at home! There is but one altar, as there is but one great sacrifice, the Lamb of God. The freeman of the Church is everywhere at home. Let them not say, It is a special occasion; I communicate at every stated time! There are no specialties in God's free grace. It flows forever like the sea. He never turns you off. Why should you turn away from Him? Let them not say, It is administered too frequently; it should be monthly, and no more! And why but monthly, more than quarterly; or yearly; or, in a life, but once? Is it written so in Holy Scripture? Was it so administered in the Apostles' times? Strange as it may seem, now, the first Christians waited on daily prayers, and were partakers of a daily Eucharist. Strange as it may seem now, the record of the Scriptures, and of the practice of the Church for many ages, shows that Christians never came together, for worship, on the Lord's day, that they

came not to this Holy Supper. They did not think that when the Saviour taught them, in His prayer, to ask for daily bread, He meant that they should care more for the bread which feeds the body, than for that which nourishes the soul. They did not find among their daily toils, and daily cares, and daily sorrows, and daily trials, and daily temptations, and daily sins, a daily draught, too frequent, of that fountain, which His love had opened, for them, in the wilderness. Those were days, when believers were of one mind and of one mouth, drinking in, as the Apostle says, of "that one Spirit." Those were days, when men went boldly to the stake for Jesus Christ; and cared not for their lives, so they might witness for His truth. Those were days, when no man lacked for any thing; for the one heart was sure to make one purse. Dear brethren, be not many masters. Do not set up to teach your teachers. "Search the Scriptures." "Hear the Church." "Obey them that have the rule over you." "If any man is willing to do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine." "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God, as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

In these, and other ways, this holy Sacrament, besides its high, mysterious, spiritual functions, becomes to Christian men, the trial of their spirits. Christ set it in His Church, and keeps it there; may we not say, as was said before of Him, "for the fall and rising again, of many"? Even as His blessed Gospel is, to some, the "savour of death." Judge yourselves, brethren, that ye be not 'udged of the Lord. No man

doubts of his condemnation, who presumes to come to such a heavenly feast, without the marriage garment required in Holy Scripture. Since no man makes that spiritual robe for his own soul, and none, who seeks for it, is sent away without it, who shall expect acceptance, who, for want of it, has never come? Hear what the Catechism teaches, is required of those who come to the Lord's Supper: "to examine themselves, whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of His death; and be in charity with all men." Hear how the Church invites all those, who mind to come: "Repent ye truly for your sins past, have a lively and steadfast faith in Christ our Saviour, amend your lives, and be in perfect charity with all men; so shall ye be meet partakers of those holy Mysteries." And again, "Ye who do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in His holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort."

"It is my Maker—dare I stay?

My Saviour—dare I turn away?"

SERMON LIII.

THE FATHER'S VOICE.

PROVERBS XXIII. 26.—*My son, give Me thine heart.*

NOTICE has been given, and repeated, that, if God please, the sacred ordinance of Confirmation will be administered, to such as are disposed and qualified for its reception, on the Third Sunday in Lent.

Our blessed Lord declared, among His latest words, he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved. Suppose it were the law, in reference to foreigners, he that shall swear allegiance to the government, and have his name enrolled, upon the public register, shall have a right to vote. Could he, who did not both these things, expect to vote? Only, remember, it is of being saved, or not—which means, of being saved or lost,—that He, who came, to save us, speaks. And, that the foreigner, who asked to vote, and would not do the two things, which the law required, would have as little right to murmur at the rule, as he would have power to change it. It is of free grace, that the State consents to his admission, upon any terms. Salvation cannot be,

of right, to any sinner. His only right is death; the wages of his sin. "Eternal life," to such as he is, is "the gift of God," in Jesus Christ. "According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration."

That gracious Lord, who said these gracious words, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," before He left the world, for which He shed His blood, gave charge to certain persons chosen from His followers, to go and make disciples of all nations—or, as He elsewhere said, to admit them, to His heavenly kingdom—"baptizing them, in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever He had commanded." Upon the day, which He Himself appointed, to begin this gracious work, a multitude, alarmed by the conviction of their sins, pressed forward, for admission to His kingdom; and were plainly told, that they must, first, repent, and be baptized without exception, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of their sins: and, then, they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. However little we may understand, as yet, the nature of this gift, when we remember, that the speaker on the day of Pentecost, was one of those, to whom the Saviour gave in trust, not only, to baptize all nations, but to teach them to observe all things, whatsoever He commanded, we cannot doubt of its necessity, to their salvation. And when, the next time it is mentioned, we find a multitude of persons in Samaria, in the very posture which St. Peter had prescribed to the inquiring multitude, on the day of Pentecost—that is to say, baptized

into the name of Jesus Christ—receiving it, from him, and his associate, St. John, in the laying on of hands—“then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost!”—we cannot but conclude, since the Apostles were to teach the nations to observe no other thing than Christ Himself commanded, not only, that the gift of the Holy Ghost, to those, who believed, repented, and were baptized, was necessary to them for salvation; but that its conveyance, in the laying on of Apostolic hands, was of divine commandment. And, when St. Paul, who, finding some of John's disciples, in his travels, first made them Christians, by baptizing them, and, then, by laying his hands on them, gave them the Holy Ghost, writes to the Hebrews, and, through them, to us, and all mankind, in every age, that, before all others, these are “first principles” for every Christian man, foundations, on which all the superstructure rests; “repentance from dead works, faith towards God, baptism, the laying on of hands,” what room is there for doubt, that confirmation, as well as baptism, like the repentance and the faith, which must precede, and pave the way for them, are Christ's appointment, for perpetual and universal observation? “According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

These are the Scriptural grounds of Confirmation. It is with it, as it is with Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord; as it was, in the beginning, it is now, and ever shall be. What the Master taught, the Apostles did. The Bishops, of their appointment, did as they

had done before them. One practice spread, through all the world ; and has continued, thus far, through all time. What St. Peter and St. John and St. Paul first did, St. Timothy and St. Titus, St. Clement and St. Ignatius did, next after them. St. Irenæus and St. Cyprian, and St. Augustine did the same. It was done, in England, by Cranmer and Ridley and Latimer, by Parker and Laud and Andrewes and Wilson. The golden chain was brought to us, by Seabury and White. And we but do, as Jerome, who was not a Bishop, says the Bishop did, in his time : laying hands on those, whom Priests or Deacons have baptized, that they may receive the Holy Ghost. In the expressive language of the Book of Common Prayer, as used at the Consecration of every Church, “grant, O Lord, that they, who, at this place, shall, in their own persons, renew the promises and vows, which they made, or which were made for them, at their Baptism, and thereupon shall be confirmed by the Bishop, may receive such a measure of Thy Holy Spirit, that they may be enabled faithfully to fulfil the same, and grow in grace, unto their lives’ end.”

It is upon this broad and deep foundation,—broad as the Bible, deep as the wells of primitive antiquity, that I now place myself, when I address to every one of you whom it concerns, the exhortation, which speaketh unto you, as unto children, “My son, give me thine heart!” Beloved, it is God, who says it. And He says it, though you yet are sinners. My son, My daughter! Is there, in human speech, a more endear-

ing word? One, that can so stir up the deepest fountains of our nature? One, that distils such balm, upon the lone, or broken, heart? Speak it, in tones of tenderness, to some poor, homesick child. Breathe it, beside the bed, where some departing soul just flickers, in the socket of the worn and wasted flesh. Let it fall gently on the ear of one that wakes, from his last sleep, on the sad morning, that must terminate his life, the victim of the violated law. What unaccustomed tears will dim the eye! What an unwonted glow will flush the cheek! What yearnings, such as only Mothers know, will half dissolve the heart. It is the remnant pulse of man's first nature, as the child of God. It lingers in him, through the curse and ruin of the Fall. It is God's hold, upon the race, for rescue and redemption. It is the quickening point, in man; where love first warms, and hope first gleams, and faith first grasps the Cross, God's mercy, in Christ Jesus. My child, "give Me thine heart."

My child, "give Me thine heart." My brethren, it is the endearing reminiscence of your Baptism. It was in Baptism, the washing of regeneration, that you were born again. It was in Baptism, that, when you were, "by nature, children of wrath," you received the Spirit of adoption, and became the children of God. "We yield Thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased Thee to regenerate this infant with Thy Holy Spirit, to receive him, for Thine own child by adoption." And, again, "Baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God." And, again,

“What is the inward and spiritual grace” of Baptism .
“A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness ;
for being, by nature, born in sin and the children of
wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace.” As
Paul taught, who, having written, to the Ephesians, of
all mankind, that they were, “by nature, children of
wrath,” writes to the Galatians, “ye are all the children
of God, by faith, in Christ Jesus ; for as many of you
as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ,”
“for ye are all one, in Christ Jesus ;” and, to the
Romans, he writes, “ye have received the Spirit of
adoption ; whereby, we cry, Abba, Father.” The per-
mission to “cry, Abba, Father,” is the privilege to be
called, of God, My child ; “My son, give Me thy heart :”
and it describes, as other words could not, the relation
and the blessings, which, in Baptism, are established
and conveyed. “According to His mercy, He saved
us, by the washing of regeneration.” It will be asked,
if only those may say to God, “Our Father ;” if to
those, only, God will say, “My child,” who have re-
ceived the Sacrament of Baptism. It is a question,
which should not be asked. Let this suffice, to say.
You can find no case on record, in the Scriptures, from
the day of Pentecost, where any, who believed, were *not*
baptized. You find no reference to Christian privi-
leges, on any other ground, than that of Baptism. You
find all Christian blessings promised to its reception.
You find it urged, as earnestly as faith, or penitence.
You find Christ speaking of it as being “born again ;”
and St. Paul as “the washing of regeneration.” You

find the new birth, nowhere spoken of, in Holy Scripture, but as the work of grace, in Baptism. With what propriety, then, inquire, if there is any other claim, to be God's children, or to call Him, Father? It is the same as asking, if there be salvation, without Christ, to them who know Him not. Or, if there be hope with God, for them, who never heard of Him. The case is not before us. The question is not as to what God *may* do ; but, as to what He says, He *will* do. For the former, we may safely trust His mercy. For the latter, we presumptuously brave His justice. It stands on record, in the very words of Christ, "Except a man be born again, of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The fountain, which He opened in His pierced side, of water and of blood, springs up, in every font ; and is, to all, who will, the laver of regeneration. Of them, who have received its heavenly washing, the Scripture leaves us not in doubt. *They* are adopted as God's children. *They* may say, "Abba, Father !" To *them*, the Scripture does address the exhortation which speaketh, as unto children, "My son, give Me thy heart !" Why, *then*, inquire, of their relation to Him, who cannot, or will not, come to Him ; and, so, be saved, as Noah was, by water ? What so becomes us, in their case, as fervent prayer, that God may reach their hearts, as He did Saul's, through Ananias ; and so bring them to Himself, as dear, obedient, children : "and, now, why tarriest thou ? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins. Most surely, if, to such, the Scripture says,

"My Son, give Me thine heart," it must be, for their summons to His holy Baptism. Most surely, if there be a child's heart, in them, it will say, at once, "See, here is water. What doth hinder me to be baptized?"

My child, "give Me thine heart." Dear children, whom God's blessing has included in these plain words of the Prayer Book,—“as soon as children are come to a competent age, and can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments;” and “are sufficiently instructed in the other parts of the Church Catechism,” “they shall be brought to the Bishop,”—to you, this touching text appeals. To each of you, your heavenly Father says, “My son,” my daughter, “give Me thine heart!” In infancy He took you, as His children, in your Baptism. He made no objection to your irresponsibility. He took you, on the word of those who brought you. He received you, as His own children, by adoption. He nursed your infancy. He watched your early childhood. He steadied the tottering step. He made the stammering tongue articulate. He developed the springs of thought. He trained the tendrils of the heart. He fed, with food convenient, your immortal souls. He used the ministry of parents, pastors, teachers, for your spiritual nurture. Have not your angels, who evermore behold your Father's face, kept watch and ward over your path? And now that you have reached the point of personal responsibility, are they not hanging with a trembling love, upon your choice? What worlds would they not give, if worlds were theirs, that you would say, with Samuel, “Speak,

Thy servant heareth." And, with Mary, choose that better part, which never can be taken from you. Beloved children, give the Lord your hearts. Come to Him, in the way, which He appoints, for you. Open your bosoms to take in the Holy Ghost; to sanctify and bless you. Let not the whisper, keep you back, that you are yet too young. Are you too young to sin? Are you too young to die? Let not the thoughtless words of your companions check you. It is you, that must account for your own souls, to God. Let not the fear of coming unacceptably prevent you. "Suffer the little children to come unto Me; and forbid them not; for of such, is the kingdom of God." Beloved friends, the sponsors and the parents of these children, the invitation of the text appeals as well to you. You brought them to Him, in their Baptism. You were then admonished to bring them up, as should become their heavenly birth. You were enjoined to bring them, in due season, to the Bishop, to be confirmed by him. You should not rest till it is done. You are not to leave it till they grow old enough to choose, themselves. You chose, for them, in Baptism. You chose, for them, in their religious training. You must choose for them in Confirmation. The exhortation is express: "ye are to take care, that this child be brought to the Bishop, to be confirmed, by him." The rubric is imperative: "So soon as children are come to a competent age, and can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and can answer to the other questions of this short Catechism, they shall be brought to

the Bishop." Do not be wiser than the Church, which has ordained these things. Do not be wiser than the Scriptures, which enjoin that children shall be brought up, "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Bring them to Confirmation, while they are young. Invoke the Holy Spirit, to make His dwelling in their hearts, while they are yet not occupied. Let their first thoughts, first feelings, first desires, be self-devoted to the Lord. Secure, in that responsible and arduous work, which daily overtakes your strength, the aids and comforts of the Spirit. The promise is to you, and to your children. Let the first fruits be holy, that His blessing be on all the harvest. "Train up a child, in the way he should go : and, when he is old, he will not depart from it."

"My son, give Me thine heart!" Not to the young alone do these words speak, but to all who would be saved. "Verily I say unto you, Whoever will not receive the kingdom of God, as a little child, he shall not enter therein." And, again, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Whoever comes acceptably to Confirmation, comes in the spirit of a child. So, the Preface. "Which order is very convenient to be observed, to the end that children being now come to years of discretion, and having learned what their god-fathers and godmothers promised for them, in baptism, may themselves, with their own mouth and consent, openly before the Church, ratify and confirm the same." And, when the Bishop's hands are laid upon the head

of each, as they kneel severally before him, it is with these touching words: "Defend, O Lord, this Thy child, with Thy heavenly grace, that he may continue Thine, forever." What are we all, but children, before God? Younger than they. More ignorant. More helpless. How full of comfort, the exhortation which speaks to us, as to children, "My son, give Me thine heart!" How full of blessing, above all, that years, or power, or wisdom can bestow, the simpleness, as of a little child, which bows the heart to Jesus; to which Jesus bows the heavens!

"Now, count His train, to-day,
And, who may meet Him, learn :
Him, childlike sires, meek maidens find,
Where pride can naught discern.
Still to the lowly soul,
He doth Himself impart :
And, for His cradle and His throne,
Chooseth the poor in heart."

SERMON LIV.

MAN'S GIFT TO GOD.

PROVERBS XXIII. 26.—My son, *give* Me thine heart.

A GIFT is that, which all men understand. It differs from a loan ; which is to be returned. It differs from a lease ; which terminates with time. It differs from a sale ; which is “for value received.” It is a thing outright, and once for all, and free. “My son, *give* me thine heart.”

A gift implies an ownership. A man must give his own. He has no right to give another's. The gift would have no grace. The text, thus, teaches, that the heart is free. The compliance with its proposal is the highest exercise of freedom. It is his having a heart, to give, that makes the moral creature, man. And he has no sublimer attribute than this, that he may give it to his God. Look at it, for a moment, in this light. God makes man. He makes him in His own image ; after His likeness. This godlikeness man loses, by his disobedience. He sins, and dies. It was his godlikeness, that was his life. Therefore, his sin is death. The Apostle calls it, “dead, in trespasses and sins.” Yet,

from that death, man may, so, rise, in Jesus Christ our Lord, who died, for us, and rose again, that he shall live, not only, but be free; and have a heart, again, to give to God. "My son, give me thine heart." Can any thing demonstrate, so, the loving kindness of the Lord? Man, His, by his creation. Man, His, by his redemption, in the precious blood of His dear Son. And, yet, man's heart, a thing, for God, to ask for, as a gift. "My son, *give* Me thine heart." It is of our redemption, in Christ Jesus, that this freedom comes. He that is dead can make no gifts. Man, in his state, by nature, has no heart, to give. He is sold, under sin. He is the bond-slave of Satan. He is fast bound, in misery and iron. In the one word, which stands, for every other, he is "lost." The Son of God becomes incarnate. He gives His heart's blood, as the ransom for the lost. He opens, in His pierced side, a shelter, for them, from their sins. And, all the lost, that will, are saved in Him. In Him, revive. In Him, have life. Are free, in Him. In Him, are sons of God. Can say, in Him, "Abba," our "Father." And hear, in Him, the Voice, which speaks, as unto children, "My son, give me thine heart."

Again, a gift is made, for love. It must be love, that prompts it. It must be love, that makes it welcome. *It must be love, that prompts it.* I know, that, what the world calls gifts, are given, without the thought of love. Gifts of a cold civility. Gifts, of an empty compliment. Gifts, of an abject flattery. Gifts, that expect as much, in return. Gifts, that lay chains on the receiver. Gifts, that secure the soul, for hell. But, are

these gifts? Are they not bribes? Are they not investments upon interest? Are they not like the king's bounty; which, whoso took was listed, for the war? Are they not wages of iniquity, of shame, of death? There is no heart, about them. They are from impulse, or of design, or of a cold calculation. Without a thought, it may be. Or if, with a thought, of simple selfishness; as, what can I get by it? These are no gifts. There is no swelling of the heart, when these are made. No yearning of the soul, which takes the loved one, into it, to whom, the gift is given: and feels the fulness of those gracious words of Jesus Christ, "It is more blessed to give, than to receive." The gifts of love are free. The gifts of love are fervent. The gifts of love are measured, by the heart's value of the beloved: and, so, seem always, to the giver, far too low. The gifts of love convey the heart more surely and effectively, than title-deeds do an estate. And, as these, but as they stand for that, are paper merely, with some ink and wax; so those, without the heart, are worthless, if not worse. "My son, give me thine heart." And, *it is love, that makes it welcome*. Who would accept a gift, from one, who hated him? Who would endure a gift, from one, whom he despised? Who would esteem a gift, from one, who was indifferent? It is a privilege to make a gift. The giver must have worth. The giver must have acceptance. The giver must be free from the suspicion of imposing any obligation, by his gift. It is love, that meets these several requirements; and more than meets them all. The love, which offered it,

would be the real value of an empire, which took in the world. And love gives equal value to its slightest gift : a book, a ring, a flower. Love gave its value, to the Cross : " God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." Love makes a cup of water, in His name, an everlasting memory, in heaven : " inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, yet did it unto me." It is to human love that God appeals : " My son, give me thine heart." It is only love that will bestow that gift. And, only love can make it welcome. " Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called, the sons of God." And, again, " Love is of God ; and every one, that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God." And, again, " If a man love me, he will keep my words ; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." And, again, " He, that loveth not, knoweth not God ; for God is love."

" My son, give me thine heart." It is the appeal of God, to human love. And, how beautiful a comment, on that text, of the Evangelist, St. John : " Herein is love. Not, that we loved God : but, that He loved us ; and sent His Son, to be the propitiation for our sins." He framed us, first, with hearts, to love Him ; and be happy in His love. Then, when our sins had lost it, to us, He restored, to us, the capability of love, in that amazing act of unexampled love, the sacrifice of His own Son. And, then, when He has taken us, in Him, to be His sons—having predestinated us, unto the adoption of sons, by Jesus Christ, to Himself ; and " saved us, by the

washing of regeneration ;"—He comes, to us, as if He had something, to ask of us, or, we something that we could add to Him : and says, " My son, give me thine heart." You are a father : or, at least, have been a child ; and felt the pulses of a father's heart. With what a truthful tenderness, it trembles, always, towards the beloved ! How sensitive, it is, to every interest ! How instructive, in prophetic apprehensions ! How fearless, in the face of danger ! How faithful, in unpalatable truth ! How studious of the opportunity of service ! In watching, how vigilant ! In waiting, how patient ! In endurance, how inexhaustible ! In prosperity, how disinterested ! In adversity, how constant ! How lavish of service ! How tender, in consolation ! How forgetful, of the evil, that is repented of ! How hopeful, of the good, that is resolved on ! What measures of generosity ! What immeasurable self-sacrifice ! Is there a child, that can resist these pulses, of a father's heart ? Is there a man, is there a woman, that can stand against the yearning love of God when He beseeches His own children to be His, and take Him for their own ? " My son," my daughter, " give me thine heart !"

" Father may hate us, or forsake ;

God's foundlings, then, are we :

— Mother, on child, no pity take ;

But, we shall still have Thee !"

" My son, give me thine heart." My brethren, in these words God, by his Church, calls you to confirmation. You were made His children, in your baptism. He left you, in His Church, as in a school, to be brought

up for Him. He gave, you, a safe shelter; a genial climate; wholesome lessons; faithful teachers; above all, the foretaste and the earnest of the Spirit. You have had time, and opportunity, and means, and motives. And, now, He says, come to Me, My child; and, in the laying on of hands, receive the Holy Ghost, to dwell in you; and live in you; and grow in you; and keep you Mine; and make you daily more like Me; and fit you, for that heaven, where I am, and where He is, Who procured it, for you, with His blood; and where you may be, if so you will, in Him. He in Me; and I in Him; and you, in Us; "defend, O Lord, this Thy child, with Thy heavenly grace, that he may continue Thine forever, and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more, until he come unto Thy everlasting kingdom;" "let Thy fatherly hand, we beseech Thee, ever be over him, let Thy Holy Spirit ever be with him, and so lead him in the knowledge and obedience of Thy Word, that, in the end, he may obtain everlasting life, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Dear children, beloved brethren, that confirmation may bring to you the gift of the Holy Spirit, you must come to it with your heart.

"My son, give me thine heart." My brethren, in these words, God, by His Church, calls you to be partakers of His holy Eucharist. It is your highest privilege. It is His highest proof of love. He gives you, in it, the Blood and Body of His Son, to be in you, through faith, the means and pledge of immortality, "the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee;" "the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for

thee, preserve thy body and soul, unto everlasting life." Beloved brethren, to come acceptably to this most holy sacrament, and share the fulness of its grace, you must come to it with your heart.

"My son, give me thine heart." Beloved, it is the call of God. He made, and knows, your heart. He made it, for a gift. He made it, to be given to Him. But, gifts are always free. Hearts are free gifts. You may refuse it, to His love. But, somewhere, you must give it. Hearts are made to give; and must be given. Is there another, that can fill it? That, can soothe it? That can meet its wants? That can keep it, when it ceases to be flesh? That can satisfy its longings after immortality? Ah, if there had been, Jesus had not died. Ah, if there had been, there need have been no purchase of the Cross. Ah, if there had been, there had been no office for the Holy Spirit. In all the universe of being, there is nothing, that can come between the heart and God. Hearts must be His; as they were made: or must be lost forever. "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

SERMON LV.

THE HEART FOR GOD.

PROVERBS XXIII. 26.—My son, give *Me* thine heart.

WE are all of us, if so we will, children of God, in holy baptism. We all of us have hearts, whether we will, or not, to be, somewhere, bestowed. As light must shine; as fire must warm: so, hearts must love. And love goes, from itself; and gives itself, unto another: and, so, bestows the heart; which is the loving thing. As we all say, a miser's heart is in his gold; a mother's, in her child. This is no accident of human nature. It is that, which makes it human: its godlikeness: now, alas, how marred! For, is it not written, "in the day, that God created man, in the likeness of God, created He him"? And, is it not written, again, "God is love"? If we may say it, God *must* love. And man, made like unto God, must love. And, in this, the curse of the Fall, most grievous, that the loving nature, which was his godlikeness, is perverted, now; and turns to evil; and loves sin; and, in it, death. The question, then, is not, if man shall keep his heart. He cannot. It must go out of him. It must find something, to lay

hold of. It must bestow itself on something. And the question is, on what? And, whether on God, or not? "My son, give *me* thine heart!"

It will be said, that there are selfish men, whose heart is never given: who live, for their own selves; and know no other love. But this is no exception, to the doctrine, now laid down. Self, in such cases, is the rival of the God, who asks the heart. But let us look at it, more closely. Investigate this self. Take the most selfish being, you have ever known. Take your own self. You never find that it is that, which is within, that satisfies. It is always something, which it has not, in itself. A child. A friend. Letters. Science. The Arts. Wealth. Place. Power. Reputation. Not to speak of sensual things, which, however grosser, they may be, are not a whit more selfish. Whatever it may be, it wins the heart. It holds it. It appropriates and absorbs it. It becomes its centre of attraction. Is enshrined, and sought to, as its idol. Is its god. Hence, the Saviour's declaration, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Where, for "Mammon," any other object of desire might just as well be put. Hence, the Apostle's loving exhortation, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." Hence the voice, which said, amid the terrors of the burning Mount, "Thou shalt have none other gods, but Me." For, that, in truth, is what it comes to. Nature will love its like. And, what it loves will be, to it, its god. God, therefore, made us like Himself: that we might love Him; and desire no other god, but Him. And, when the Tempter won the first-

created, from their worship of the one Creator, it was to worship him, and such as he is, and the things which come from him, and go to him. Radiant, they may be, with the splendours of what seems intelligence, and power, and beauty: as, doubtless, he did, when, through the eye, he gained the ear of our too credulous first mother. Veiled, they may seem to be, in purity and tenderness and loveliness: as even he puts on, to serve his turn, an angel's garb. But, when the charm has wrought; and the poor soul is won; and the strong spell, its purpose gained, is broken: there will remain the foul and naked truth; the serpent's scales and slime and sting.

“My son, give me thine heart!” *It is the voice of its Creator.* How certainly, it must be wise! Who else can know the heart, as He who made it? You have a nice and delicate instrument; the choicest, that was ever made; such as but one has ever made. A chronometer, perhaps, of workmanship unrivalled. Its fine machinery becomes deranged. There is a cloud of rust, upon the spring. Or a mote, which eye cannot detect, obstructs a wheel. Or some attraction, unaccounted for, has stayed an axle, on its pivot. It stops. Or it goes wrong. You cannot trust, or use, it. Is it done with, beyond hope? Must it be lost? Is there no eye, that can detect, no hand, that can repair the injury? You take it to the maker. You confide it to his care. You give it up to him. As it now is, it is worse than worthless; for it leads astray. He, peradventure, may restore it. If not he, none can. You give

it up to him. Is it not so, with the heart? How jarred, by the convulsion of the Fall! How soiled, with the corruption of the world! How disarranged! How marred! The will perverted. The affections degraded. Crippled energies. Abused faculties. A ruined nature. No power of self-recovery, more than of self-creation. No one, but Him, who made it, with the skill or power, to meet the dire emergency. And He, with willingness, as great as His ability, waiting, and longing, and yearning to receive it, and repair it, and restore it, and renew it, and perpetuate and perfect it, in heaven. "My son, give *Me* thine heart!"

"My son, give *Me* thine heart!" *It is the Voice of its Redeemer.* How certainly it must be kind! When was love ever otherwise than kind! What greater love had ever man, than this, that he lay down his life, for his friends! And, yet what love, as far surpassing this as love surpasses hate, that, while we were yet enemies, Christ died, for us! The voice, which says, "My son, give *Me* thine heart," speaks, to us, from the Cross. Forgets the pain and shame. Forgets the reeling earth. Forgets the darkened heaven. Forgets the jeering mob. Forgets the lacerating nail. Nay, presses down its heart, upon the spear. That, as it pours its life-blood out, for our redemption, it may say—Oh, can such love beseech, in vain?—"My son, give *Me* thine heart!" Give it not to the world, which hangs *Me*, here. Give it not to that old enemy, whose hour and power it is, to bruise *My* heel. Think not to keep it, for thyself; that hast no power, to keep it. But, give it to *Me*. And

take Mine for it, that is breaking, now ; and, bleeding, for thy love : that I may dwell in thee, and thou in Me ; and we be one ; and, that, forever. “ My son, give *Me* thine heart ! ”

“ My son, give *Me* thine heart ! ” *It is the Voice of its Sanctifier.* How certain, that it must be good ! Oh, what a wondrous love, in God, to make us like Himself ! Oh, what more wondrous love, when we had lost our godlikeness, by sin, to purchase and restore it, with the blood of His dear Son ! Oh, what most wondrous love, that, when the Lamb had come, from heaven, to bleed for us ; the Dove should, still, be given, to brood upon, and bless us. As David saw, before, and said ; and Paul explained it and applied it : that, when He, who bought us on the Cross, ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, He should send His Holy Spirit, to dwell among us : to be our Comforter, while He is with us, here ; our Sanctifier, that we may be for evermore with Him, hereafter. To be the Comforter, it need not be said, of those only, who receive Him, to themselves ; to be with them, and live in them : to be the Sanctifier of those, alone, who give their hearts up to Him, to be the shrines of living temples, in piety and holiness. “ As God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing : and I will receive you, and be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

“My son, give *Me* thine heart.” It is the voice of God, which, by His Church, calls you to come, to Him, in Confirmation. In Baptism, you were made His children, by adopting grace. He made you, thus, heirs of His heavenly kingdom. He would prepare you, now, for your admission, there; and fit you, for its pure enjoyments. As your redemption, from the curse of sin, was by the blood of His dear Son, so must your rescue, from its power, be through the grace of His divine and Holy Spirit. That It may work in you, for your renewal, in His image, you must yield yourselves to Him. As dear obedient children, you must submit to His instruction and direction. In one word, you must give your heart to Him. Give it to Him as the best member, that you have; your life, your all. Give it to Him, as His, by every right; as your Creator, your Redeemer, and your Sanctifier. Give it to *Him*, as the divine original, in which it, first, was made; and, to whose likeness, it would be again transformed. Give it to *Him* in the deep places of whose love, alone, its wants can all be met. Give it to *Him*, whose grace, alone, can keep it safe, through faith, unto salvation. Give it to *Him*, who can, alone, direct it, in the paths of life; sustain it, in the hour of death; and be its heritage of immortality. Refuse not Him, who speaketh to you from the heavens; and saith, “My son, give *Me* thine heart.”

“My son, give *Me* thine heart!” *It is the Voice, which speaketh, to the young.* Now, while the dew is, yet, upon your heart; while it is fresh and fragrant; before the blight has passed upon it from the world’s

hot breath: give it to God. Secure it to Him, while you may. Secure it to Him, in the season, that He most delights in. Secure it to Him, in the season, which will bring His blessing on your after-life. The first-fruits always were the Lord's. His choicest saints were His, in their first years. Samuel was God's, as soon as he was weaned. The Spirit of the Lord came upon David, while yet a youth. Isaiah did that which was right, in the sight of the Lord, from eight years old. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. Timothy, from a child, had known the Holy Scriptures. The Holy Pattern of all goodness, at twelve years, was in His Father's house, upon His Father's business. The little children are His choice, from all our race. They are His models for mankind. Their angels always do behold His Father's face. Of them, and such, His kingdom is made up. Why should you lose the comfort of these blessed precedents? How can you stand, against the force of these most gracious arguments? "Remember, now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth." While you are yet young, give yourselves up to God, who gave Himself, for you. My child, "give Me thine heart!"

"My son, give Me thine heart!" *It is the Voice, which speaketh to the men and women, of the middle age.* Your case is the most critical, of all. Your time is so much taken up. Your thoughts are so forestalled. Life is upon you, with so stern a load. Death seems so distant from your door. The daily duties so entirely occupy the day. The dim repose of a serene old age

seems so sufficient for your preparation. Meanwhile, one text makes up your Bible: "If any provide not for his own, and specially for them of his own household, he hath denied the faith; and is worse than an infidel." As if it were not also written: "he, that hath the Son, hath life: and he, that hath not the Son, shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him." As if it were not also written: "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Ah, my beloved, the one, you ought to do; and not to leave the other undone. "Seek ye, first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." "Commit your way unto the Lord; and put your trust in Him: and He will bring it to pass." Only, give Him your heart: and He will give Himself to you and all things else, in Him.

"My son, give *Me* thine heart!" *It is the Voice, which speaketh to the aged.* And, with an eloquence, how touching! That He still waits, for them. That He will accept the heart, which has been worn out, in the world. That if they will only come to Him, now, when the eleventh hour is nearly gone, He will make them equal with the rest. But they must hasten, while they may. With them, the time is short. To all, death may be near. To them, it is. Oh, if you should delay, one hour, too long! Oh, if the habits of your careless life, should be too much to overcome. Oh, if while yet the spirit slumbers, and the lamps remain untrimmed, and there is oil to be procured, the Bridegroom come! Oh, if, through everlasting ages, the lament should be;

“the harvest is past, the summer is ended ; and we are not saved !”

“My son, give Me thine heart !” Beloved, it is God, who asks it. Asks it in tender love. Asks it, from the bleeding Cross. Surely, it cannot, any longer, be in vain. Surely, at last, you will arise ; and come to Him. “My son, give Me thine heart !” “Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”

SERMON LVI.

THE HEART, MAN'S ONLY GIFT TO GOD.

PROVERBS XXIII. 26.—My son, give Me *thine heart*.

It is a sublime thought, that not even God can take the heart, which is not given. This is not said irreverently. The heart is His creation. He made it, to be free. If it were not free, it could not love. And, if it could not love, it were no heart for Him. "God is love." And, what a touching thought: that what He made free; made free, if one may say it, against Himself; and makes His holiness its guaranty of freedom, He condescends to ask for: "My son, give Me thine heart." It was too much, for even a Roman nature to resist, when, once, a mother came, as suitor to her son, out to the Volscian camp. Even Coriolanus, in the smart of all his wrongs, found it impossible to

"stand,
As if a man were author of himself;
And knew no other kin."

How is he human, who can stand against his heav-

only Father, when He says, "My son, give Me thine heart?"

"My son, give Me *thine heart*." It must be the heart. It must be the whole heart. It must be the whole heart, heartily.

i. It must be the heart. What else have you to give? Your wealth? It is not yours. You hold it upon trust. A trustee cannot give. Your minds? They are lent to you. To use. For others. To use for God. You cannot give what you have borrowed. Your bodies? You have but a life interest, in them. You cannot give a life-estate, away. It is the heart, alone, that you can give; because the heart alone is yours. "My son, give Me *thine heart*."

And, it is the heart alone, which God desires. What He would have is love. Can gold love? Or land? Or houses? Can the mind love? Or can the body? Men spurn such love. Or clasp it: and have clasped a cloud; or snake. God asks it not. He asks the heart. Because what He would have is love. And love is of the heart.

And, for another reason, it must be the heart, that you bestow, on God. "It is home, where the heart is." Even heaven, would be no home to him, whose heart is elsewhere. "Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also." And, where the heart is not, treasures can have no worth. You may wed the land. You may wed the gold. You may wed the throne. The body may be wooed and won. But, if the heart be wanting, they are chains; however pure the ingot they were

made from. It is but misery, whatever mirth be in the masquerade. And, if you could bestow the universe on God, and He would take it from you, in giving Him not your heart, you give Him nothing. "My son, give Me *thine heart*."

In pleading, with you, then, for God, in confirmation, we plead, dear brethren, for your heart. We do not wish you just to come up to the chancel-rail, and say some words, and kneel, and feel the pressure of the Bishop's hands upon your heads; and rise, and go away, as thoughtless and as careless, and as much the world's as ever. We ask you to no mere decent form. We ask you no mere reasonable engagement. We ask you to no mere solemn ceremonial. All this, indeed, it is. The institution of the Lord Himself, by His Apostles, honoured and hallowed with the hoar of eighteen centuries. Your own most reasonable service! The very beauty of holiness. But to come to it acceptably, it must be more than this: the free-will offering of the heart to God, to be His own. "My son, give Me *thine heart*."

ii. And it must be the whole heart. Can the heart be halved or quartered? Can more than one be first? Can love go into partnership? Is a man two, or three, or twelve? That he can have as many masters; and bestow as many hearts? No, man is one, as God is. One God, one heart, make up, for each of us, the moral universe. There would be polytheism, else. So many hearts, so many gods. It cannot be. The heart can only be bestowed on one. I do not mean by this, that

when the wife becomes a mother, the conjugal and the maternal love must be in conflict, till the one expel the other. I do not mean, that, when the heart is given to God, it is withdrawn from man. St. John meets both these cases, under one: "Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him." The truest and the fondest wife will be the truest and the fondest mother. The heart, which is surrendered with the least reserving fervour to the love of God, will glow the most intensely, with the love of man. The love of God shuts out the love of self. The love of God subdues and crucifies the world. The love of God shrinks, from the thought of sin. He that is born of God—he that having been made His child, in holy baptism, continues His, in filial love—doth not commit sin, since, love can never hate. But for the rest, the two commandments are but one. The love of God is, much more, love of man. So the Apostle reasons: "He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" And so, our Saviour taught: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; this is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it; thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

It is no violence to nature, then, beloved, when in pleading with you for God, in confirmation, we ask your whole heart for Him. It is the law of nature, rather, "No man can serve two masters." It is a rule, without exception. You must choose whom you will serve.

The parents of our race chose Satan, before God. They could not join the two. The choice of one was the rejection of the other. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." The freedom of that choice, which Adam so abused and lost, has been restored, in Christ. The purchase of the Cross procured it, for us; with the grace, to use it wisely. In holy baptism, these were conveyed to you, in infancy; or in riper years, you sought them, for yourselves. In confirmation, you are summoned to its exercise. We say to you, with brave old Joshua: "Choose you, this day, whom you will serve; but as for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord." We say, to you, with dying Moses: "I call heaven and earth to record, this day, against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him; for He is thy life, and the length of thy days." We say unto you with loving and persuasive Paul: "Yield yourselves unto God." "My son, give Me *thine heart*."

iii. And it must be the whole heart, heartily. A world of difference, this always makes; as everybody knows. It is recorded of the Patriarch Jacob, that he "served seven years, for Rachel, and they seemed, unto him, but a few days, for the love he bore to her." There never was a finer touch of nature. What men do heartily, they do with ease, they do with pleasure, they do effectually, they make no count of doing. And such a service always finds acceptance. With the Lord no other

will. He sees the heart. It is the heart, for which He asks. We give Him that, or nothing; undivided, un-reserving: the whole heart, heartily.

A heart, thus given to God, is anxious, above all, to know His will. Like the angels, who excel in strength, it hearkens, for it. It separates itself, as far as may be, from the stir and din of earth; that it may hearken. It stills the storm of passion, and the pulses of desire, and every wayward and tumultuous thought, that it may hearken. It hearkens to the word of God. It hearkens to His Church; as Her deep voice comes sounding on, through the long vault of buried ages. It hearkens to Him, in His providence. It keeps still; as children in a thunder-storm, that it may hear.

A heart, so given to God, hastens to do His will. Like the angels, who excel in strength, it does what it has heard. It stands upon no reservations. It undertakes no distinctions. It makes account of no exertions. "Lord, I am thine: what wilt Thou have me to do?" "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." "Give me understanding, and I shall keep Thy law; yea, I shall keep it with my whole heart."

iv. A heart, so given to God, is cheerfully resigned to bear His will. It is in all its prayers: "Father, Thy will be done!" It is in the place, to it, of all arguments: "Even so, Father; for, so, it seemed good, in Thy sight." It is worth more, to it, than all other considerations: "Nevertheless, not as I will; but, as Thou wilt." It

has no doubts. For, it replies, at once : " Will not the Judge of all the earth do right ? " It has no fears. For, it remembers : " They that be with us are more than they that be with them. " It has no difficulties. For it knows, that, " With God, all things are possible. " It has not so much as a will. " It is the Lord," it says : " Let Him do what seemeth Him good. "

It is so, beloved brethren, with the heart, with the whole heart, with the whole heart, heartily, that I invite you now to come to Confirmation. Few words, are they, in which you give yourselves to God. But they are clear, express, and full. " Do ye, here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow, that ye made, or, that was made in your name, at your baptism, ratifying and confirming the same ; and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe and to do all those things, which ye then undertook, or your sponsors then undertook for you ? " " I do. " Beloved, do you remember, what they were. Look back, and weigh them well ; and lay them to your heart. " Dost thou renounce the Devil, and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the sinful desires of the flesh ? " " I renounce them all ; and by God's help, will endeavour not to follow nor be led by them. " " Dost thou believe all the articles of the Christian Faith, as contained in the Apostles' Creed ? " " I do. " " Wilt thou be baptized, in this faith ? " " That is my desire. " " Wilt thou, then, obediently keep God's holy will and commandments ; and walk in the same, all the

days of thy life?" "I will, by God's help." In coming for that help, you thus avow your purpose. You feel your need. You own your weakness. You bewail your sinfulness. You cast your cares, on Him who careth for you. And you ask that His strength be made perfect in your weakness. "Lord, I believe; help, Thou, mine unbelief!"

"My son, give Me *thine heart*." In dwelling, for four Sundays, on these words, I may have seemed as one that harped, upon a single string. Had I been seeking your amusement, I had not done so. I might have found variety, to please the most Athenian ear. But is it so, in nature? Is it so, in life? Is it not the daily sun that warms the air? The nightly dew, that greens the earth? Does not the impulse, which first starts the germ, to burst the acorn, work on and up and out, into the oak, which crowns the forest? Is it not the constant dropping, which eats out the stone? Is not all permanent impression, by reiteration? Is it not so in the Arts? Is it not so, in common life? Is it not so, in education? "Line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little?" Is not all duty simple? Is not truth, everywhere, the same? Is not God one? Is not the soul one? Is there not one way of life? Is there not one gate of heaven? "One Lord, one faith, one baptism?" One Cross? One Church? One Crown? Beloved, we have not time, in life, to be Athenian seekers of new things. In death, the thought of them will

not occur to us. And, at the judgment, but one thing will remain : eternal life, or, else, eternal death. Which of the two, it shall be, will have turned, upon one text : “ My son, give Me thine heart.” Will you ? Or will you not ?

SERMON LVII.

THE END OF THE LORD, IN SORROW.

PSALM CXIX. 75 (Prayer-book version.)—I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right ; and, that Thou, of very faithfulness, hast caused me to be troubled.

HISTORIANS relate, of the Christian Emperor, Mauritius, that, when, by order of the tyrant Phocas, who had usurped his throne, his five sons were slain before his face ; and the dagger drawn, for his own death-stroke, he cried aloud, in David's words, " Righteous art Thou, O God ; and upright are Thy judgments ! " It was the noble confession of a most noble confidence. And the soul which had attained it, might " smile, at the drawn dagger ; and defy its point." The passage, chosen, for the text, while it breathes the same entire and perfect confidence, gives it a fuller, and more distinct, expression : " I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right ; and, that, Thou, of very faithfulness, hast caused me to be troubled."

Of the desirableness of such a conviction, so established, even if present satisfaction were the end, who can doubt ? In all the relations of life, what we most highly prize is confidence. Frail, indeed, is that union,

which it does not confirm. Most irksome, that dependence which it does not sustain. Without it, what were human friendship; what were human love? What else preserves the fealty of souls, whom hemispheres divide. Into what other keeping, would we confide our happiness, our honour, and our life? Disease or accident befalls us. We put our life into the surgeon's hands. His eye, we know, is skilful; and his aim is sure. Distress or danger threatens us. Into the ear of well-tried friendship, we pour out the story which involves our peace. We know, that were its bosom searched with knives, and red-hot pincers, our secret would be safe. The little child, secure, in the accustomed shelter of his father's arms, heeds not the tempest's rage: or, from his mother's bosom, smiles at the thunder's crash; and bathes his playful finger, in the lightning's blaze. He knows, with nature's kindest instinct, the sure protection of parental love: and only errs in over-estimating its extent. And can the charm which sanctifies the interests of time be dispensed with, in those which run out into eternity?

Is there more need of confidence, between the creatures of a day, than between themselves, and Him, who made, preserves, and governs them? Is it much, to know, that the hands, which we grasp, are true; and, that the bosom, on which we rest, is faithful? And is it nothing, to say with Maurice, in his utter destitution: "Righteous art Thou, O Lord; and upright are Thy judgments!" Or, with David, come what may, "I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right; and,

that Thou, of very faithfulness, hast caused me to be troubled!" My beloved, in a matter so momentous, choose, as wise men should. If the investment of your money costs such care and thought, how cautious should you be in the investments of eternity! If earthly goods and human sympathies can win and keep your confidence, how much more the unchanging verities of the eternal and divine!

You have all had trial of the uncertainty of present things. You have had wealth, perhaps; and it has taken wings. You have had friends; and they have fallen, by your side. You have had children, fair and hopeful, and dearer than the throbbings of your heart, and they have sunk upon your breast; and glided through your hands; and fallen, into the grave. And what has been the lesson, of these vanished joys and buried blessings? When you had them, you never thought that you could lose them. They were the absorbing objects of your thoughts and your affections. In the light of their surpassing loveliness, you found your heart's desire filled up. And, at the morning dawn, and with the dying day, their shadow passed between your soul and God. You ought to have regarded them, as treasures, lent you, by the Lord; and, so, not yours, but His. They should have been, as cords of love, to bind your hearts, to Him. But, now, the Lender calls His treasures in: that, if possession could not, loss may, bring you to Himself. Meanwhile, it is the same God; whether He give, or take away; whether He caress you, or chastise. And it is

the same godly discipline, whether it come to you in sorrow, or in joy ; and it is the same design, which He pursues ; whether He come to you, in love, or, with a rod. For, my beloved, when your trials tempt to murmuring, think, from whom they come. Unerring wisdom, almighty power, perfect justice, and unbounded goodness, are but the shadows which His brightness casts across our path. And, when a single word is used, to sum up all His attributes, in one, it is that word of words, which teaches us, that “ God is love.” If, then, the blessed hand, which formed us, at the first ; which, all our life, has fed us, to this day ; which has filled up our cup, with mercies till it overflowed, should mix it, with one single bitter drop, shall we reject it, like spoiled children : and complain, as if His goodness were clean gone ? Let us rather think, that, in our “ high and palmy state,” He saw one cankered spot, which called for the immediate knife. And, with His blessed Son, however bitter it may be, drain off the draught. “ The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it ? ” “ I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right ; and, that Thou, of very faithfulness, hast caused me to be troubled.”

If the light of His life-giving favour, which guided us by day, and cheered us in the loneliness of night, be turned away from us ; and we be left to walk, in bitterness alone : shall we complain, that His paternal heart has cast us off ; and murmur, at the loss of His old loving kindnesses ? Let us, rather, carefully consider all our ways ; to see, in what we have offended.

Let us be sure, that, not in Him, but, in ourselves, the change has taken place. And, turning back to Him, with penitence and tears, let us beseech Him with the Prodigal's petition: "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before Thee; and am no more worthy to be called Thy son; make me as one of Thy hired servants." "I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right; and, that Thou, of very faithfulness, hast caused me to be troubled."

If plans of life, which we have long pursued and prospered in, be foiled and frustrated; if high and holy aims be disappointed and defeated; if the fair earnings of our honest toil, laid up for charitable uses, and sanctified, by prayer, and giving of thanks, be wrested from our hands, by accident or fraud; if the green plants of our affection, so fair and fragrant, in their pure and joyous beauty, have been blasted, by our side, and turned to dust: shall we cry out, as if the Lord had done unkindly by us; and say, with the impatient prophet: "it is better for" us, "to die, than to live"? Rather, let us remember, that, however dark the dispensation, the eye of God looks through it, all. We see but the beginnings of events, which run into eternity. Our sight takes in the smallest segment of the circle, which is all in His. We reach a link or two of the vast chain, which lies coiled up, within the hollow of His hand. How vain the effort, to explain His plans and comprehend His counsel! How arrogant the thought, that they should be conformed to us; not we to them! Impressed with thoughts, like these;

sure, that "the Judge of all the earth" will certainly do right; convinced, that, what we know not now, we shall hereafter: let us say, with the bereaved Emperor, "Righteous art Thou, O Lord; and upright are Thy judgments!" And, with the Psalmist, "I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right; and, that Thou, of very faithfulness, hast caused me to be troubled."

Whether we regard the revelations, which the Scriptures make to us of God; or the disclosures of His works in the Creation, or in Providence, or our experience of His dealings, with ourselves: the submission of the text is, both our duty and our happiness. His perfect and eternal nature can have no end to answer, in the abridgment of our comfort. We look round, on the world, we look back, on our lives: and feel, in countless forms of blessings, which spring up, about us, and within us, that He makes His own happiness, in making others happy. But, let a black cloud float across the sky, and cast its shadow, on the landscape; and the conviction fails. The ceaseless song of air and earth and sea, that He is good, and doeth good, is drowned, or set aside. The mercies, which have overflowed upon a life, are all forgotten. And we sit down, and fret against the Lord, as if He owed, and did not pay us; or had taken, from us, something, which was not all His own. The child, that dealt so with his parent, would be corrected, for his frowardness. We should tell him, that his temper had got the better of his judgment; that he was looking through a false and morbid medium; that when he came of age, and was

himself a parent, he would know how much his chastisement had cost his father's heart, and how essential it had been for his true honour and abiding happiness. And what are we but fretful, froward, children? While the smiles of His love are upon us, it is our Father, who is in heaven. But, if the wholesome frown, which our abuse of His indulgence calls for, takes its place, it is no more our Father; but a hard and tasking master. We forget the countless tokens of a Father's love. We forget the exhortation, which speaketh to us, as to children. "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord; nor faint, when thou art rebuked of Him; for, whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth; and scourgeth every son, whom He receiveth." Hear the words of one, who cannot be suspected of a partial statement, on this subject: "When afflictions fail to have their due effect," says Lord Bolingbroke, "the case is desperate. They are the last remedy, which an indulgent Providence employs. And, if they fail, we must languish and die, in misery and contempt. Vain man! How seldom do we know what to wish or pray for. When we pray against misfortunes, and when we fear them most, we want them most. The shortest and the best prayer, that we can address to Him who knows our wants, and our ignorance in asking, is this: Thy will be done." It certainly is as impious as it is absurd, to regard the afflictions which God sends, as proofs of His displeasure. The very opposite is true: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for, when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which God has prom-

ised to them that love Him." The very heathen had attained a measure of wisdom, on this subject : the gift of that pervading Spirit, which "giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." "Never say, thou hast lost any thing," says Epictetus ; "but that it is returned. Is thy son dead ? He is only restored. Is thy inheritance taken from thee ? It is only returned." The Gospel teaches the same lesson, from a better motive, with a higher view. It instructs us, that, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. The present life, it teaches, is the passage home to God. As travellers, our needs are small. More would but overload us. If we have much, our fellow-travellers should share it with us. If we lose what we had, we could not have carried it much farther. Our friends, who sink beside us, into the grave, go to an earlier rest. Our children, when they die upon our bosom, are not lost ; but gone before. We shall look backward, with one sigh, the less. We shall press onward, with one hope, the more. At home, in heaven, the purchase for us of a Saviour's blood, we shall find that His judgments were all right ; we shall know that it was of very faithfulness, that He caused us to be troubled.

SERMON LVIII.

THE CONVENIENT SEASON.

ACTS XXIV. 25.—Go thy way, for this time : when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

How true to nature ! How often we have used such words ! How easy to rely on the “convenient season !” How seldom found !

Felix was Governor of Judea. He represented, there, the imperial majesty of Rome. Suetonius plays upon his name—which is the Latin word for *happy*—as holding so honourable a place ; and having been the husband of three queens. One of them, the daughter of the king of Mauritania, is said to have been the grand-daughter of Antony and Cleopatra. But it takes more than royal marriages, or royal power, to make a happy man. A happy man must be a good man. And, of Felix, Tacitus relates, that, indulging, in every form of cruelty and lust, he administered the government in the very spirit of a slave. What elements for happiness ! Lust, which can never cease from sin. Cruelty, which lashes itself forever, with its scorpion sting. And slavishness, which crouches before power ; and licks the

dust, for favour. You may call him Felix. But, you cannot make him, happy. You may address him, with the sycophant Tertullus, as "most noble Felix." But, it will not make him noble.

"What can ennoble sots, or slaves, or cowards?
Alas! not all the blood of all the Howards."

To speak, as men speak, Felix had the Apostle in his power. To see, as God sees, it was exactly the reverse. While Paul was in his custody, he sent for him, one day, as he might have sent for any player, to hear him, "concerning the faith in Christ." Paul went. He would go anywhere, to save a soul. He knew what Felix was. He knew the power of the everlasting Gospel. He went to the vice-regal court. He stood before the tyrant and his paramour. He knew, that she had violated the marriage-bond, and profaned the sanctities of home. He knew, that he had outraged every law of God and man. He made no compromise of truth. He paid no court to vice. He had no compliments for Felix. He had sent for him, to hear him "of the faith in Christ:" and "of the faith in Christ," he spake. Not, of a curious, speculative, faith, about which, the philosophers might cavil. Not, of a formal, superstitious, faith, which used itself all up, in signs and ceremonies. Not, of a dead and barren faith; or, one which bore at best, but leaves and blossoms. The faith, he spake of, was a real faith, an earnest faith, a living faith, a fruitful faith, a faith which works, which works by love, which keeps the commandments, which

overcomes the world. He "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." He "reasoned of righteousness," to one, by whom, all right was disregarded; of "temperance," to one who had controlled no passion, and denied no lust; "of judgment to come," to one who cared not for the past, and recked not of the future: a tyrant, a libertine, an infidel. No doubt, the haughty minion had promised himself fine sport. To bait a bishop were almost as royal, as to bait a bull. He would hear what "this babbler" had, to say. He would know what could be made of that poor Nazarene, whom Pilate had had crucified. He would take measure of "the faith in Christ." At first, he held him, at the distance of a supercilious sneer. As the Apostle warmed, he fell into an unintended courtesy. He ceased, from patronizing, soon; and grew uneasy. His restlessness increased upon him; and he thought he must be nervous, from last night's debauch. He shrunk. He paled. He trembled. "Felix trembled." He was guilty of unrighteousness. He was self-convicted of intemperance, in every grossest form. He was convinced of judgment. And, he read before, the sentence of eternal condemnation. "Felix trembled." The gay voluptuary; the scoffing sceptic; the cruel and relentless tyrant: "Felix trembled." Glorious Gospel; conquering Church; Voice of the Omnipotent; Hand of the Eternal: the support of thrones; the terror of the tyrants that disgrace them! A manacled Apostle, the Master of the Vice-imperial Majesty of Judea! "Felix trembled." Like a dog that has disobeyed his master.

Like a slave that has been detected in a theft. "Felix trembled." Conscience, for a moment, conquered. Truth, for a moment, was triumphant. Virtue, for a moment, was almost victorious. And, if that victory had been complete, if that triumph had been thorough, if that conquest had been permanent, Angels would have filled the courts of heaven, with songs of joy, for one repentant sinner; and Felix would have been the happy. But Satan knew his man, too well. Hell had too long had hold upon his heart. He was more than matched against himself. And, in a moment, the complacent convict rallied from the shock: and answered, with a grace beyond the reach of Chesterfield, "Go thy way, for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." He thought, he thought so. He was sincere in self-deception. Was he not young, yet? Was he ever in more vigorous health? Was it not the gayest season, at the Court? He had a new intrigue, in hand. He caught the eye of an old boon companion. What would they think of it, at Rome? How could he give Drusilla up? How could he kneel before the Cross, and be baptized? How could he bear the Cross, before the world, through all his life? He must think of it, a little more. It would seem hasty to surrender, yet. In many ways, it would be inconvenient. The time would come, no doubt. He was quite sure it would. It would do then, as well, as now. It would do better. "Go thy way, for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

i. This is a lesson against hardening the heart. Fe-

lix was once a child. The time was, when he had not sinned. The seed of the first sins springs up, in shame and sorrow. But, the nature, that is in us, is inclined to evil. The stream grows deeper, as it runs. Habits soon harden into nature. Of self-indulgence, selfishness is born. And covetousness, of selfishness. And, every crime, of covetousness. There is but one security. "Keep thy heart, with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." "My son, give me thine heart."

ii. It is a lesson against procrastination. What can to-morrow promise, that to-day has not? Nay, can to-morrow give good bonds for its own appearance? And when it comes, will it not be to-day? Will God be more unwilling that a soul should perish? Will you be nearer the repentance, which, alone, can win His mercy? Will the stream, which you must cross, have run itself, all, dry? Will the ball descend less rapidly, for being further down the hill? Will the wild vine, which has spread out its poisonous tendrils, till they sway the very pulses of your heart, be easier dislodged, for one night's growth? Why should to-morrow be "a more convenient season"? Who ever found "a more convenient season"? Whence can it ever come, but from the holy purpose, which resolves to make it? Man makes his seasons, for himself. Man moulds his circumstances. Man shapes his immortality. Would God so yearn upon the sinner, if it were not so? Would Jesus Christ have borne the painful Cross of Calvary, if it were not so? Would the Divine and Holy Spirit brood and flutter, like a dove, about the hearts of men, if it

were not so? No, Felix had the grace within his reach, when he shrunk, trembling, from the prospect of the judgment, to grasp the Cross, and live through Him, who died on it. But he put it off; and perished. He never found the more convenient season. His venal nature never sought to find it. So far from it, he put it at a greater distance. He fed that grovelling devil, avarice, instead. "He hoped, also, that money should have been given him, of Paul, that he might loose him." The Viceroy of Judea would have sponged the tent-maker of Tarsus: and, then wrung from the poor saints, their scanty mite, in requisition, for his rescue. "Wherefore, he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. But, after two years, Porcius Festus came into Felix' room; and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound." So much, for his "convenient season." Where he now is, seasons do not come.

iii. It is a lesson not to trifle with the means of grace. What Jerome, or Augustine, would have prized the most, on earth, to hear Paul preach, Felix attained. He "heard him concerning the faith in Christ." He heard his reasoning "of righteousness, and temperance, and judgment to come." And he confessed the power and unction of his preaching, by such shudderings, as shook his soul. Nor was this all. He had him, at his court, for a whole year. He had constant access to him. He saw him very often. He saw him on the most familiar terms. And yet, when all was done, although he knew that Paul was innocent, he left him in his chains; and that, for no more worthy motive, than to please a pack

of persecuting Jews. There is no power, even in Paul's preaching, to convince a man against his will. There is no virtue, even in Peter's shadow, to save a man from self. Look to it, my beloved, that the same results be not recorded of yourselves. You dwell under the blessed shadow of God's Church. You have heard, for two, not only, but for twenty or for forty years, her preaching of His Gospel. Her holiest things lie all along your path. The Word of God falls daily, from her mouth, upon your ear. You feel the music of her choirs. You breathe the odour of her sacraments. Is her truth, which is the truth of God, upon your hearts? Is her life, which is the life of God, within your souls? With all these means of grace, is the "convenient season" come? If it would please the Jews, are you quite sure, that you would not leave Paul bound? If Christ were in the hands of hypocrites and heathens, are you quite sure that you would not say, Crucify Him!

Brethren, the preaching of the Gospel is for practical results. The Church is for the reformation of the world. It seeks this end through individual hearts. It pursues them, with stated, sacred means. It comes to you in Christ's name, and is, as Christ, to you. By us, He speaks, and says, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." And you reply, "Go thy way, for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." By us, he speaks and says, "Drink ye all of this;" "do this, in remembrance of Me." And you reply, "Go thy way, for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." To whatever

we invite you, in His name, to Confirmation, to self-examination, to self-renunciation, to self-devotion to His service, it is still the same—cool, courteous, self-complacent—“Go thy way, for this time ; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.” Beloved, we can do no more. Paul had no power to hold procrastinating Felix. And Jesus, when he wept upon Jerusalem, could only say, “Ye would not.” We are but messengers, for Him. We can but bring His Gospel to your ears ; and ask you, in His name, to be partakers of its grace : and, yet, you bid us go our way ; and wait till you shall send for us. Remember, my beloved, He has other messengers, that wait not on your will. He wings the wind with pestilence. He takes the life out of the air. He makes the dews drop death. Will the grave wait on your will ? Will death defer his coming, till you call ? Is it before, or is it after judgment, that you look for the “convenient season” ? Saviour and Judge, save us we pray Thee, from ourselves.

SERMON LIX.

ONE ADVOCATE FOR ALL THAT SIN.

1 ST. JOHN II. 1, 2.—My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Two things must strongly impress every careful reader of the Holy Scriptures: the great number of passages, like the text, in which the whole plan of salvation is presented, in two or three short verses; and the close coherence of the portions of the sacred text, so that you have to go back verse after verse, to find the place, where the connection properly begins. As to the first, the Epistles of St. Peter and St. John, and, more than both, St. Paul's, abound, in these brief, graphic summaries of truth. A point, in which, no other book, that I have ever seen, or heard of, presents a parallel. As to the second, to do justice to the passage, now recited, which is the beginning of a chapter, you must go back, quite, to the middle of the chapter, which precedes it. "This, then, is the message, which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and, in Him, is no darkness, at all. If we say that we have

fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship, one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." And, then, the text, "My little children"—the word, "little," then, as now, an epithet of fondness: as if, He said, being now an old man, of an hundred years, *My darlings*—"these things I write unto you, that ye sin not. And, if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous: and He is the Propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

In these plain words, the beloved disciple addresses us, my brethren, as his dear children, his darlings, in Christ Jesus:

- I. ENJOINING US NOT TO SIN;
- II. ASSURING US, WHEN WE HAVE SINNED, THAT WE HAVE AN ADVOCATE, WITH THE FATHER;
- III. SETTING FORTH THE SURE GROUND, AND UNIVERSAL COMPREHENSION OF HIS ADVOCACY.

I. *The Apostle enjoins on all believers not to sin.*
 "My little children, these things I write unto you that ye sin not." *My beloved, do not sin!* Have you thought what sin is? "Sin is the transgression of the

Law." Of the Law of your Creator. Of the Law of your Preserver. Of the Law of your most bountiful Benefactor. Of the Law of your Heavenly Father. Do you love the father, who begot you? Do you love the mother, who bare you? Would you coldly disregard their will? Would you obstinately resist their wish? Do you not rather hasten to anticipate it? Do you not rather delight to do more than it? Is it not your constant effort, so to live, towards them, that, when you stand by the grave, which opens for them, conscience will add no bitterness, to the hot tears, which fall into it? Beloved, is *He* less, to you, than they, who gave you, both? Will you transgress the Law of your kind Heavenly Father? *My beloved, do not sin!* Sin separates you from God. He is Life. Will you depart from Him? He is Love. Will you depart from Him? Where will ye go? Out of Him, there is no life. Apart from Him, there is no happiness. Away from Him, there is but hell. *My beloved, do not sin!* Sin mars in you the godlikeness. Adam was made like God. Adam loved God. And the love of God was perfect happiness. He sinned; and hid himself. Hid himself, from the God of his life. Hid himself, from the God of his love. Can any thing, so mean, so miserable, be thought of? To hide himself, from God! Beloved, when you sin, you hide yourselves from God. All beings love their like. And, when, the godlikeness is lost, the love of God is gone. And we hate Him, whom we have injured. And we hide ourselves from God. *Beloved, do not sin!* "The wages of sin is

death." Death, now, in separation from Him, who is the Life. Death, in the hour of death, in all the anguish of an intolerable remorse. Death, after death, in endless exile, from the light and love of God. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." *Beloved, do not sin!*

But you have not sinned. You never stole. You never murdered. You never committed adultery. You never take the name of God in vain. You remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. With that rich young man, you say, "All these have I kept from my youth up." But, what is that, then, which is written: "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"? Ah, my beloved, sin is a subtler thing than we suppose. It circles in our blood; and twines itself about our thoughts; and mixes with the throbbings of our hearts. Beloved, do you love God, with *all* your heart? Nothing, that comes in between your soul, and Him? Nothing, that you think of more often, than of Him? Nothing, that you ever prefer to Him? Your meditation, of His precepts? Your effort, to obey His laws? Your delight, to do His will? His word, your constant study? His house, your continual resort? His altar, your chief joy. Prayer, always welcome? Praise, your habitual occupation? "*My little children,*" the *Apostle* says, "*do you not sin?*" Beloved, do you love your neighbour, *as yourself*? Is every one your neighbour? Do you do to all, as you would have all do? Do you neglect no opportunity of service? Do you seek for it? Do you delight in it? Is there nothing in his inferiority, that flatters you? Is

there nothing in his misfortunes, that you do not quite regret? Is his disparagement displeasing to your ear? Is his vindication your victory? Do you so love your neighbour as yourself, that you might mistake his interest for yours, and serve it, as you would your own? Beloved, this is the Christian Law. And its transgression must be sin. "*My little children,*" *the Apostle says, "do you not sin?"* Can there be one that does not? And, since the Scripture saith, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die," can there be one, that lives?

II. Alas, my brethren, if God were strict to mark what we have done amiss, not one of us should stand. But there is mercy with Him, that He may be feared. *And therefore the assurance in the text, if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous.* An advocate with the Father; lest any should despair. But, Jesus Christ, the Righteous: lest any should presume.

i. An Advocate with the Father, lest any should despair. Sin cuts us off from God. He cannot look upon iniquity. In our transgressions we must perish. But there is One in heaven, who has been tempted like as we are; and yet never sinned. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He has been tried in the furnace of our temptations. He remembers the sufferings through which He passed: and so has mercy upon us. He takes our part. He pleads our weaknesses. He urges our forgiveness. He intercedes for our acceptance.

ii. But, now, lest any should presume, the Advocate

with the Father is Jesus Christ, the Righteous. It is the sinless One, who pleads for sinners. How surely, then, they must repent. How surely, then, they must forsake their sins. How surely, then, they must return to God! Salvation is not simply safety. It is Restoration. Restoration to purity; that there may be restoration to peace. Renewal in holiness; before there can be reception into heaven. On the one hand, there is mercy with God. But on the other hand, it is that He may be feared. Not mercy, that the sinner may go on, to sin. Not mercy, that the sinner may be saved, in carelessness, and impenitence, and unbelief. Not mercy, that the sinner may be saved, who does not seek, and strive for his salvation. But mercy, for the contrite in spirit. Mercy for the broken in heart. Mercy for him that believeth in Jesus. Mercy for him that cometh unto God, in Him; bearing His cross; striving to enter in at the strait gate; straining every nerve; and agonizing for salvation. According as it is written, "Come unto Me, all ye that travail and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." And again, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." And again, "He that will be My disciple must take up his cross and follow Me." And again, "Seeing that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted like as we are; yet without sin."

III. And, then, *the grounds, on which His advocacy is made, are stated; that we may see what sin has cost: and, yet, its universal comprehension; so that all may freely come.* “He is the Propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” By Propitiation, we are to understand the atoning Sacrifice, by which the Father was made propitious, to us sinners. St. Paul explains it fully, in that wonderful Epistle, to the Hebrews: where he tells us, that the High Priest of the Jews, by God’s appointment, went, once, into the Holiest Place, on the great day of the Atonement, “not without blood, which he offered, for himself, and for the errors of the people; but that Christ, the great High Priest, not, by the blood of goats and calves, but, by His own blood, entered in, once, into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption, for us.” As the beloved John, in another place: “herein is love: not, that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son, to be the propitiation for our sins.” Such was the cost of sin: the offering up, upon the Cross, of the only-begotten Son of God, as the atoning sacrifice for sinners! And then, as to its universal comprehension: “Who gave Himself a ransom for all;” “and, by the grace of God, tasted death, for every man.”

And, now, beloved, to take in the wondrous scheme of our redemption, and reach the height of this great argument, we must repair to Calvary. Year after year, the Son of God, incarnate, for our sins, pursued His work of love. In the beautiful expression of St. Luke,

He "went about doing good." He was opposed, He was calumniated, He was persecuted. He did but labour more assiduously for His opposers; and pray more fervently, for His revilers. As He said, His enemies prevailed. He was betrayed. He was accused. He was condemned. He was crucified. At once, the Priest and the Victim, He offered Himself, without spot, to God, to take away the sins of the world: and on the Cross, achieved the triumph over sin and death and hell. Upon the third day He arose; the first fruits of the harvest of the grave. And, having stayed with His Apostles forty days, to instruct them as to the nature and design of that Church, which He had purchased, with His blood, He ascended, in great glory, into heaven; there to appear, in the presence of God, for us. At the right hand of the Eternal Majesty, He stands, the Advocate for sinners. He pleads, for them, the purchase of His Blood. He pleads, for them, the anguish of His Wounds. He pleads, for them, the tortures of His Death. He pleads, for them, the terrors of the grave. He pleads, for them, the unknown, untold, unutterable agonies of His incarnate exile from the bosom of the Father. On the one hand, what an argument for the exceeding sinfulness of sin: that it could cost such a sacrifice, that it could be atoned for by none less. On the other hand, what an argument of unreserving and unbounded love: that it could make such a sacrifice, and, then, plead its merit, for the sinners, that had made it possible. In the benignant aspect of its mercy, how can the contrite sinner doubt,

that such desert, so pleaded, will prevail with God? In the fearful contemplation, of that unbending justice which did not spare the unoffending Lamb, how can the unrepentant sinner hope for pardon? In the close reasoning of St. Paul, "How can we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" In the beseeching expostulation of St. John, "My little children, these things, write I unto you, that ye sin not: and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." "To them who are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish." To the believing penitent, "Mercy and plenteous redemption."

My beloved, while we struggle with you, in these stammering words, the Advocate is pleading with the Father, for your pardon and acceptance. His wounds, His blood, His death, are urged in your behalf. What must the holy angels think, who hear His pleadings; and who witness your indifference? Indifferent, when the plea is for your sins! Indifferent, when the strife is for your souls! Indifferent, when the issue is eternity! A moment, more—it is *not* a moment, in the comparison of all the ages, that come after—another moment, and the heart has ceased to beat. Another moment, and the resurrection-blast is heard. Another moment, and the books are opened; and the judgment-throne is set. Another moment, and we, all, stand, naked, before God. Another moment—oh, what eter-

nal ages hang upon its issues, with their immortality of happiness, or misery!—another moment, and the plea is closed; the atonement is secured, or lost; the Advocate is Judge; the sentence is pronounced; eternity has been decided. “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but, the righteous into life eternal.” Merciful Jesus, who pleaded for us, with the Father, plead *in* us, by Thy Spirit; that Thy dear pleadings may prevail with *us*, and, so, with *Him*: and, to the Trinity in Unity, the undivided One, the unconfounded Three, shall ever be ascribed, in Thy beloved name, eternal glory and immortal praise.

SERMON LX.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF ALMS-GIVING.

ACTS xx. 35.—Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Not all, that the Lord Jesus did or said, was written, by His Evangelists. So far from it, the disciple, whom He loved,—and who loved Him, or He never would have addressed him, from the Cross, “Behold thy Mother!”—concludes his Gospel, with these expressive words, “And there are also many other things, which Jesus did; the which, if they should be written, every one, I suppose, that, even the world itself, could not contain the books, that should be written. Amen.” The text is one of the sayings of the Lord Jesus, which are unrecorded, in the Gospels. Many of them were, long, in oral circulation. Some of them, as scholars know, have been recorded, by the early Fathers. To that, which I have just repeated, a happier lot has fallen. Happier, I mean, for us. Since it has not been limited to oral use, among the ancients; nor shut up to the confidence of scholars; but recorded, on the page of inspiration; and, in that, “revealed” “unto babes.” St.

Paul had heard it, from—we know not whom—St. Peter, or St. John : and St. Luke, who heard him say it, at Miletus, has written it, in his “Acts of the Apostles,” “for our learning.”

Great force is often given, to a passage, and great beauty, by the manner of its introduction. I dare say, that a text of Holy Scripture has often taken, to your eyes, a clearer light, and, to your hearts, a greater force, by its citation, as the theme of a discourse, or its introduction, in the progress of it. And it is so, with these “words of the Lord Jesus.” Had they formed part of the Sermon on the Mount, or been the closing sentence of a parable, they would not have had the point and pregnancy, which they now possess. St. Paul was on an apostolic visitation of the Churches. They were slips of the true vine, which his hands had planted, and which he had watered, with his tears. He was on his way to Jerusalem, “bound in the spirit,” “not knowing the things” which should “befall” him, “there.” He had summoned, to Miletus, the elders of the Church at Ephesus, the priests or presbyters, whom he, himself, in former visits had ordained. He knew, that they should see his face no more ; and, so, he spoke to them, as it became a dying man, to speak : and, if there should be chosen, from all Holy Scripture, a manual for ministers, in fewest words, it is this sermon, at Miletus, that should certainly be taken. And its conclusion, and the height of its great argument, is furnished, by the text. “I have showed you all things, how that, so labouring, ye ought to support the weak ; and to remember the words

of the Lord Jesus, how He said, "It is more blessed to give, than to receive." "And, when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them, all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him; sorrowing most of all, for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship." How graphic! How dramatic! The little company is gathered on the shore. The bark, that is to bear forever from their eyes, its sacred freight, is straining on its hawser. The lingering, last farewell just dies, upon the ear, in the wild dashing of the rough Ægean. And as they turn from that fond, parting, gaze, the words that fell the latest on their ear, so beautifully taught in his self-sacrificing life, from whom they heard them, spring, from their hearts, to be the mark and motive of their after lives, "*It is more blessed*"—He hath said it, who, for us, gave up His very life, upon the Cross—"It *is* more blessed to give, than to receive." And, for myself, with nothing to be claimed, in common with the great Apostle, but a share in his high ministry, and to be the chief of sinners, when the last words of my instruction, to the people of my charge, come to be uttered,—as God knows, it may be, this day!—may they die upon your ears, in those words of the Lord Jesus, which were St. Paul's last utterance, at Miletus, "*It is more blessed to give, than to receive.*"

I know that this is far from being a popular text. I know that the hearts of men, with rare exceptions, are set on getting. It is the natural instinct. The infant

shows it. It is nurtured, in the little child, by the box; into which his pennies go, and have to stay until the box is broken. It causes nine out of ten of the quarrels, among boys. And men devote their lives to it. And old men die, its drudges. A minister of Jesus Christ, or a philanthropist, who sets out to serve some object of benevolence, is laughed at, for his enthusiasm; is called, habitually, a beggar; is put off with the smallest sum, that decency permits; if not turned rudely away, with the reply, "I never give!" And, in the House of God, where alms go up, with prayers, for a memorial, before Him, what a convenience are the three-cent pieces; which avoid the vulgarity of copper: and, yet, save two cents! And, all the while, my brethren, "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

i. "It is more blessed to give than to receive," for this one reason, at least, which no one can deny; that the giver must have more than the receiver. To have something, that we can give, is unquestionably blessed. And he, the most blessed, that has the most to give. And God, the blessed one, by eminence; whose all things are. My brethren, think of this. Remember that you have nothing, which you did not, first, receive. Remember, that he that has the least, among you, can, still, give something, to another, who has less. Remember, that he, who has the most, among you, is, in that respect, the most like God. And, since it only could proceed from Him, could never have been meant to minister to self, which He most hates. Why, all His names prove that. For, God means *good*. And Lord

means, *bread-giver*. And Jesus means, *Saviour*. And, so, on. And, those, who are nearest to Him, are the most like Him. As His beloved Son, who, when He was in the flesh, "went about doing good." And "the Angels, who excel in strength," are only praised, for this, that they are "ministering servants," to the "heirs of salvation." And, mark the princeliness, in this respect, of all His saints. Of Abel, and of Noah, and of Abraham, and of David; and of Peter, and John, and Paul, and Barnabas. Why, the latter got his name, which means, "*the son of consolation*," because he sold his land, and brought the money, and laid it at the Apostles' feet. And the inspired description, of those who were, first, "added to the Lord," was, that none of them said, "that aught of the things which he possessed was his own;" but they "sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." And the people that Jesus loved the best, and stayed with most, were Martha, and Mary, and their brother; who, in their poverty, were glad to entertain His greater poverty: for, He, who made the world, had given up all; and had no house, to live in. And the woman, whose act, He said, should "be spoken of, for a memorial of her," and is, "wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the world," was she, who broke her box of alabaster, and poured its precious ointment, on His head. And of all that He saw, casting money into the treasury, the richest, in His estimation, though there were very rich men there, was that poor widow, who cast a farthing in, which was her all. And, that

the very poorest might take courage ; and not feel the text, "it is more blessed to give, than to receive," no text, for them, He summed up one of the most impressive of His sermons, with the declaration, "Whosoever shall give to drink, unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water, only, in the name of a disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall, in no wise, lose his reward."

ii. But a better reason why "it is more blessed to give than to receive," is, that it proves a better disposition. Anybody can keep ; or any thing ; a miser, or a monkey, or a mouse. But, to give is godlike ; and requires a man ; or more, a woman. Look at a mother ! What she suffers, in advance ! What she suffers, at the time ! How she welcomes the poor helpless thing, that cost her so much suffering ! How she devotes herself to it ! How she denies herself every thing, for it ! How she thinks more of it, than of all the crowned heads, in Christendom ! Yet, it returns her nothing. It may, never, be any thing, to her. It is enough for her, that she can give ; and it, receive. It is boon nature's law. And the words of the Lord Jesus do but re-enforce the law of nature, which, as the God of nature, is His own. And, so, you see, "*It is* more blessed to give, than to receive." You felt it, when you sent the ton of coal, to that poor widow, when the deep snow fell last winter. You felt it, when you watched, the night, with that poor consumptive sufferer. Sir Philip Sidney felt it, when, at Zutphen, he declined the cup of water, for the dying soldier, (though he himself was dying,) with these memorable words, "His necessity is greater than mine." Beloved brethren, when

you reject the words of Jesus Christ, "It is more blessed to give, than to receive," you reject a natural instinct. Aristotle could say, "There is more virtue in doing good, than in receiving it." Plutarch could say, "It is more pleasant to do a kindness, than to have one done." Seneca could say, "I had rather receive no benefits, than grant none." It is the one happiness of earth, into which no alloy can enter. It is that, which is so perfectly our own, that none can take it from us. It is that, which lives with us, in the remembrance of its satisfaction, through our life. And it is that, which enters, with us, into heaven.

iii. And this suggests the third and last reason, why, "It is more blessed to give, than to receive." Not that heaven can be attained, by gifts. But that he, who does not give, as he has opportunity, cannot be there. "Then shall He say, also, unto those, upon His left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; naked, and ye clothed Me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not. Then, shall they also answer unto Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment." Be not deceived, beloved brethren, the

man who seeks his own, and has not learned, that “it is more blessed to give, than to receive,” if he could reach heaven, could not stay there. He could have no sympathy. He could find no company. Dorcas is there. But she was full of good works, and alms-deeds, which she did. Cornelius is there. But his prayers and alms had “come up, for a memorial, before God.” Barnabas is there. But he was called, because he was “the Son of Consolation.” The Twelve are there. But they left all to follow Christ. It is the home of saints. But they had taken up the Cross. It is full of Angels. But they were servants to the Saints. And Jesus Christ is there, and fills it with His glory. But the wounds are in His hands, and in His feet; and the thorn-prints are, still, upon His brow; and, in His side, the piercing of the spear. In all that blessed company, the man, that lived unto himself, could meet with no companionship. And, in sheer self-defence, would ask to be excused, from the intolerable solitude of heaven.

Beloved brethren, we have lived together, now, as parishioners and their pastor, for more than one and twenty years. Whatever else I may have done, I have kept constantly before you the doctrine of the text, “It is more blessed to give, than to receive.” And, for myself, whatever I have had, it is all gone, and I am glad of it, in the service of the Church. You have sometimes thought, perhaps, that I have worried you to give. But I never asked you to give me any thing: and you will bear me witness that I have had but precious little from you. On the other hand, to all my propositions

you have paid a generous regard. In the matter of the offerings of the Church, you have gone far ahead of all the other parishes. To this new Church, some of you have been liberal givers. And there are those, among you, who have freely met the enterprise, which certain noble men have been toiling at, for many years, to redeem and perpetuate St. Mary's Hall and Burlington College; and to save my marrow and my brains from the hammer of the auctioneer, and the hoof of the extortioner. But you never hurt yourselves, by any thing that you have given. You never gave in any just proportion to what you have spent in vanity, if not in sin. You never denied yourselves one comfort, or one luxury, that you might give. In one plain sentence, you have done what David would not; and served the Lord with that which cost you nothing: that gracious Lord, who thought it not too dear to buy you with His blood.

And, now, dear brethren, I have loved you quite too long, and love you quite too well, to keep myself from any service to your souls. "It is more blessed to give, than to receive:" and, what a pastor, I should be, to grudge you any blessing! Hear me a moment, while I lay before you, then, my heart's most earnest yearning for your good. By the good hand of God upon us, we are settled now in our new Church, in peace, and harmony, and love. What you have given towards it, you remember, only, now, as your most sacred pleasure. But for the more than two-thirds of its cost, which came to you from pious members of the Church of England almost a century and a half ago, you are trustees, to God,

for those who need the blessedness which you enjoy. To you, I say, as the Apostle, to the Christians at Miletus, "I have showed you all things, how that, so labouring, ye ought to support the weak;" and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, "It is more blessed to give, than to receive." This Church is now too nearly full to admit of any increase of our communion in this city. Not that it is too small. An hundred families are quite as large a flock as any pastor can take care of. But, that, while the Church was building, the congregation, by God's blessing, has been much enlarged. Another Church, is needed, now, at once. It is needed in the eastern portion of the city, which is filling up most rapidly. It should be built by us; because we have the means; and have this Church besides. *It should be a free Church—as all churches should be, while grace continues to be free—because the people, whom we hope to gather in it, have, for the most part, no such preference as yet, for our faith, discipline and worship, as would induce them to be much at charges, for them. It should be thrown, for its support, when it is opened, on what, I feel assured, would well support it, the free-will offerings of the worshippers. There should be a Church School, in immediate connection with it, where the children of the worshippers, and others, might be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. There should be a simple parsonage, in which a humble Priest might live, and feed the

* This has been partially accomplished, in the successful establishment of St. Barnabas' Free Mission, with a Chapel building, and two Parochial Schools.

flock of God committed to his care. And there should be, to complete the Christian circle, a Church Home, where the sick, the infirm, the aged, and the destitute, might find protection, consolation, help, and healing; and, with them all, and better than they all, the teaching, and the prayers, and the two sacraments, of which the Church was made God's almoner to men. My brethren, to do this I think to be your duty; and I know to be your blessedness. And this, with God to help me, I am perfectly resolved, shall be done. I ask you, now, for nothing, as a gift. I only ask you to think of it; to pray over it; to talk of it, one with another, as serious men, of that which most concerns their present and eternal good. When you are ready, I expect you to come to me, and make your offerings; and to make them large and free; in full proportion to God's blessing on your hearths. I have but the text to offer, as my argument, "It is more blessed to give, than to receive." I have but these words of the Lord Jesus to present in illustration: "Then shall the King say, unto those on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom, prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For, I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; naked, and ye clothed Me; I was sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or

naked, and clothed Thee ? Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee ? And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Blessed Jesus, give us, above all Thy gracious gifts, the gift to love to give.

*SERMON LXI.

SIN'S WAGES AND GOD'S GIFT.

ROMANS VI. 23.—The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A GOD, of love! And, yet, a dying soul! This is the great moral enigma. It has perplexed the race, from the beginning. The Gospel, alone, can solve it. Socrates, the wisest of uninspired men, meditating on the scraps of tradition, which he had found floating in the world, could attain to the conjecture; “that the soul is immortal, and has judges, and will suffer punishments.” And, as he drained the hemlock, could say, to his disciples; “we must now separate: I, to die; and you, to live: but, whether is the better of the two, only God knows.” It was for Paul, whose eyes were touched, with eye-salve, made in heaven, to see straight through it all: “made manifest, by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ; who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light, through the Gospel.”

In the text the problem of our moral nature is stated, as only Paul could state it, for conciseness; yet,

* The last sermon preached. The Graduating Address at St. Mary's Hall, in March, A. D. 1859, was the last written.

for clearness: "the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

As if he said,

SIN EARNS DEATH:

ALL SIN; AND SO, ALL DIE:

LIFE IS THE GIFT OF GOD, THROUGH CHRIST OUR LORD.

I. *Sin earns Death.* Death is no chance result. Still less an arbitrary act of power. God is *the* Life. Death cannot spring from life. It is its opposite. And so, "destruction" is God's "strange work." The Manichean theory supposed two powers in conflict. The good and the evil. The Maker and the Destroyer. But two Almighties are impossible. Destruction is self-wrought. There was an angel once. High, noble, glorious. Basking and blazing in the light of God. And rising ever nearer and more near, toward the glory that is unapproachable. But he aspired to reach it. He rebelled against it. And he fell, self-ruined. "Nine days he fell." The chains and darkness, which his rebellion won for him, he is to wear forever. Immortal natures are immortal sufferers. Again, there were two glorious creatures, in a garden of delight. The man was made like God. The woman made from man; his counterpart, a help, meet for him. Both holy. Both happy. And both free; as that which God delights in must be. For, He delights, in love. And love *is* freedom. Into this fair garden, that archangel ruined, fallen so low—the highest nature always falls the lowest—that he could crawl in, as a snake, found his infernal way. He knew,

that where freedom was, sin might be. And, that, where sin entered, death must follow. And, so, he lied, against the Lord. And lied, against his own experience. And told them, that God was only jealous of them. And that they surely should not die. They trusted. They were tempted. And they fell. They ate. They died. God's image in them was their immortal life. Its loss, their everlasting death. It had to be so. Can you put out your light, and not have darkness? Can light and darkness be together? Or can sin and life? "In the day, that thou eatest thereof"—it is the inevitable and eternal law of moral natures—"in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Did not sin earn death?

II. i. And, now, *all sin : and, so, all die*. In the first place all are born sinners. You plant an acorn. Does it yield a pine? You graft a thorn, from a green-gage. Does it bear peaches? You cultivate a thistle. Do you gather figs? Does a tiger ever produce a lamb? Was an owl's egg ever hatched into a nightingale? Are white men born in Central Africa? Or Chinese in Newfoundland? There is no answer, needed, to these questions. Like is produced of like; as an unerring law of nature. And, when Eve and Adam sinned, they made their children sinners. As St. Paul, so graphically, says, "by nature, born, in sin." And David, with such penitential humiliation: "Behold, I was shapen in wickedness; and, in sin, hath my mother conceived me." I know that men object to this as a hard saying. The

same, who never look for grapes, on thorns ; or doves from vultures. But without admitting, that it would be a hard saying otherwise ; I object to it peremptorily, with the revelation of the blessed Gospel open, that the Lamb of God hath taken away the sin of the world : and His blood cleanseth from all sin. So that, in every baptized infant, the stain of birth-sin is washed out.

ii. But, in the second place, and notwithstanding this, all sin. There never was but one, in human shape, who did no sin. And He was God ; incarnate for our sins. Stand up, now, any one, that has not sinned. I do not say, of you, who sit before me, here. But, of the human race. I do not say, that, now, is. But, of all that ever were, from Adam. Stand up, before me, now, whoever dares ; and say, I have not sinned. I wait. None rises. All have sinned. Alas ! it is too true. "There is no man that liveth and sinneth not." "And in many things we offend all." "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done ; and we have done those things, which we ought not to have done ; and there is no health in us." All sin ; and, so, all die. Does the consumptive die ? "There is no health, in us." Does the apoplectic die ? "There is no health, in us." Does the sick of the dropsy die ? "There is no health in us." What are these graves ? Records of sin. What is their annual greenness ? Its perpetual confession. It has been so, for a hundred and fifty years. In Burlington, in Yorkshire, from which, "the rude forefathers of the hamlet sprung," it has been so for fifteen hundred years. In Jerusalem, for three

times that. And every grave, so many million millions, a sermon on the text; "the wages of sin is death." Was there ever text, so preached from? And the preaching will go on; how long, God knows: until the graves shall open, at His voice, and all that are in them "shall come forth;" "they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

For the grave is not the measure of the death, which is sin's wages. If man had been made mortal, it might have been so. The grave might have closed up the account. But, he was made immortal. He is immortal, in his sins. He is immortal, in his death. Can a soul die? Can the soul, that dies in sin, cease to be sinful? Must it not rise, as it lay down? Must it not go on forever as it rises? Where is the stopping place? A thousand years from now? What is a thousand years, to immortality? No more than the thousandth of a second. In the comparison of infinite, all finites are the same. In a moment, you may do an act; in a second, you may speak a word; in the thousandth of a second, you may think a thought that shall, forever, burn, into the soul; and burn, with it, forever: "where their worm dieth not; and the fire is not quenched." Do I say hard things? I am glad, you think so. I am glad you think enough of what I say, to think so. I say God's truth. And death and judgment and eternity will sadly and forever prove it true. "The wages of sin is death." Shall the hireling not receive his wages? The sinner is the hireling of the Devil; and his pay is sure. The universal law of nature, that gives to every seed its

proper yield, is not more sure of execution. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap. He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

III. You see the difference, my beloved. That which is sown to the flesh, our natural sins, reap their own kind, self-yielded. That which is sown to the Spirit, our purposes and practices of holiness, of the Spirit, have their harvest. It is what the Apostle, in the text, declares, in other words; but perfectly in parallel, "The wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life." Man cannot earn eternal life. He had not earned it at the first. It was given to him, at the creation. "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Then, when he lost it, by his disobedience, the power of its recovery was lost: "dead in trespasses and sins." Can the dead man raise himself up from the grave? If fallen man have immortality restored to him, other than immortality in wretchedness, it must be given him, by Him, from whom, it came, at first. "The gift of God is eternal life." And that is not the whole. The words which follow tell the fearful story: "through Jesus Christ our Lord." Not without Him, could that gift be; and God maintain His holiness. For that, the Son of God must stoop from heaven. For that, the Son of God must "not abhor the Virgin's womb." For that, the Son of God must be

cradled in a manger. For that, the Son of God must be a hungry, homeless, wanderer. For that, the Cross must be set up on Calvary; and the Son of God, pour His heart's blood out, upon it. And for that, the Son of God, lift up into His Father's ear, the fearful cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" So much, did it cost, that "the gift of God," to fallen man, might be "eternal life." In words, whose terrible condensation, not even Dante ever reached—the words of the Apostle Paul, to the Ephesian elders, assembled at Miletus—"the flock of God, which He purchased with His own blood."

"The wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." God does not give eternal life, immediately, as from Himself; but, mediately, "through Jesus Christ our Lord." The Holy One could make no compromise with sin. It must be expiated. "Without shedding of blood, there is no remission." But, of what blood? Not men's; for that was forfeited, by sin. Of course, not that of bulls or goats. Whose then? Two texts will answer. Of the seed of the woman, God said, at the very instant of the Fall, to the tempting Devil, who had wrought it, "It shall bruise thy head." St. Paul fills up the sketch, when forty centuries had made the prophecy a history: "When the fulness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." It is in baptism, that this adoption is effected. As the Catechism teaches: "bap-

tism, wherein I was made a Member of Christ, the Child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." Yet *not* a baptism, without penitence. "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Yet, *not* a baptism without faith. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved."

Behold, beloved, the evangelical solution of the great moral enigma of humanity. A God of love. And yet a dying soul. A dying God. And *so* a living soul. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have eternal life." In simplest form, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." And YET, a belief that *must* repent. "Except ye repent, ye shall all perish." A belief that *must* be baptized. "Be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins." A belief that *must* be holy. "Follow after holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." And above all, a belief, that loves, "For, in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."

Thou who didst die, for us, and rise again, win us, to die, to sin; help us, to rise, to righteousness: that bearing here, Thy Cross, we may, hereafter, share Thy crown; and unto Thee, with the Almighty Father and the eternal Spirit, shall be ascribed, for evermore, the glory and the praise, world without end. Amen.

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